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Crypt of CTHULHU.

HPL's Fragments



CRYPT OF CTHULHU

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C O N T E N T S

Editorial Shards	2
On "The Book"	3
By S. T. Joshi	
On "Azathoth"	8
By Will Murray	
On "The Descendant"	10
By S. T. Joshi	
"The Thing in the Moonlight," A Hoax Revealed .	12
By David E. Schultz	
Where was the Place of Dagon?	14
By Will Murray	
Faulty Memories and "Evill Sorceries"	18
By Robert M. Price	
And Yet Even Still More Limericks from Yuggoth .	23
By Lin Carter	
Did Lovecraft Have Syphilis?	25
By Robert M. Price	
Who the Hell was Winfield Scott Phillips?	27
By Will Murray	
Iranon and Kuranos: An Intertextual Gloss . . .	31
By Donald R. Burleson	
From the Vaults of Yoh-Vombis	34
By Lin Carter	
R'Iyeh Review	38
Mail-Call of Cthulhu	44

Debatable and Disturbing: **EDITORIAL SHARDS**

"Lovecraft's Fragments"—sounds rather ghoulish, doesn't it? In our field of weird fiction fandom, we so love every tale by our favorite authors that we must have access to every piece of juvenilia and marginalia. The temptation to "finish" a writer's unfinished scraps is great. Critics suggest that this is wish-fulfillment pure and simple: since there is no more real fiction forthcoming from the lamented writer, we merely write new stories based on his discarded snippets and pretend we are reading new tales by the Master himself. Wasn't the late writer wiser? He could see that what he had begun wasn't worth finishing; why can't we see it? In defense of posthumous collaborations, we might point out that writers often see less merit even in their finished works than their readers do. Remember that HPL "repudiated" several works including The Case of Charles Dexter Ward.

Unlike Robert E. Howard, Lovecraft has attracted few attempts to finish his fragmentary manuscripts. Recall that August Derleth's many "posthumous collaborations" were nothing of the sort. Whereas Lin Carter and L. Sprague de Camp, for instance, actually did fill out

Howard's synopses and complete his drafts, Derleth merely used bare hints and ideas listed in Lovecraft's Commonplace Book. The closest he came to a real collaboration was perhaps "The Survivor," with The Lurker at the Threshold coming in second.

Two of Lovecraft's fragments have been finished. They are A. A. Attanasio's "The Black Tome of Alsophocus" (in Ramsey Campbell, ed., New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos), a completion of "The Book," and an as-yet-unpublished completion of "The Descendant" by Lin Carter.

The "Lovecraft's Fragments" issue of Crypt of Cthulhu features a set of analyses of the fragments themselves, as Lovecraft left them. S. T. Joshi's "On 'The Book'" has appeared previously in Nyctalops. My own "Faulty Memories and 'Evill Sorceries'" is based on part of an article called "The Legacy of the Lurker" back in Crypt #6. I have elaborated it a bit for reincarnation here.

You will find that even the tiny canon of Lovecraft's fragments holds a certain interest of its own. You may even be in for some surprises.

Robert M. Price, Editor

On "The Book"

By S. T. Joshi

Lovecraft's fictional fragments have not received much attention from critics, and perhaps deservedly so; for by their very incompleteness they are aesthetically unsatisfying, the more so since we have no idea how Lovecraft intended to finish them. The fragments can gain value only by the possible light they may shed upon the history and progression of Lovecraft's writing. For example, it is conceivable that "Azathoth" (1922) is a vague adumbration of Lovecraft's later novel, The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926-27). Even in this respect we encounter difficulties; for the dating of the fragments is often uncertain and tentative. "Azathoth" is clearly dated to June 1922, as Lovecraft alludes to it in a letter;¹ but "The Descendant" (the title is R. H. Barlow's) is dated—plausibly but none the less arbitrarily—to 1926, and the original manuscript helps little in this regard, as does internal evidence. Barlow also supplied the title for "The Book," and dated it hesitantly to 1934, while "The Thing in the Moonlight" is the most curious of the lot: it survives only in a posthumous publication, the fanzine Bizarre (1941), and Derleth dated it to 1934, on no apparent grounds. That it is a late work is evident by the mention of 66 College Street in the third paragraph (Lovecraft moved into this last residence in May 1933); but the fragment is largely an excerpt from a dream as recorded to Donald Wandrei on 24 November 1927²—a date actually mentioned in the fragment. Moreover, the latter portion of the text may not be Lovecraft's at all: several sentences here are distinctly un-Lovecraftian in style.^{2a} But "The Book" offers some insights into Lovecraft's techniques of fiction-writing which make it rather more interesting than the

others.

Let us first attempt to date the fragment as precisely as possible. Barlow's date of 1934 is probably not far off, for the manuscript is written in that tiny, spidery handwriting typical of Lovecraft's late works. We can, however, perhaps be rather more exact. Note this passage from a letter of 2-5 November 1933:

I am at a sort of standstill in writing—disgusted at much of my older work, & uncertain as to avenues of improvement. In recent weeks I have done a tremendous amount of experimenting in different styles and perspectives, but have destroyed most [emphasis mine] of the results.³

Perhaps both "The Book" and "The Thing in the Moonlight" could be referred to here. We must also remark that the dream of an evil clergyman which Lovecraft wrote into a brief tale (actually an excerpt from a letter to Bernard Dwyer) dates to October 1933.⁴ This period seems to have been a time of great psychological stress for Lovecraft in terms of fiction-writing: he had suffered painful rejections (At the Mountains of Madness by Weird Tales; collections of his work by Putnam's and Knopf), and appeared to have great difficulty in recapturing that fluency in writing which had characterized his 1926-27 period (after his return from New York), when he produced The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath and The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, plus several shorter tales, in a period of about six months. Indeed, after writing "The Thing on the Doorstep" in August 1933, he would write no more original fiction save "The Shadow out of Time" (which itself went through three drafts)⁵ in

November 1934-March 1935, and "The Haunter of the Dark" in November 1935.

"The Book" may then date to late 1933; but it is far more interesting not when considered by itself, but in connection with one of Lovecraft's most celebrated works—the *Fungi from Yuggoth* sonnets, written in late 1929 and early 1930.

The relations between the *Fungi* and Lovecraft's prose fiction have perhaps not been fully realized. Some of the sonnets are echoes or—more interestingly—foreshadowings of themes and plots used in his fiction. "The Courtyard" (IX) perhaps contains vague references to the earlier story "He" (1925):

As edging through the filth I
saw the gate
To the black courtyard where
the man would be. (II. 7-8)

"The Bells" (XIX) mentions the name "Innsmouth" (cited first in "Celephais" [1920], but set there in England), used later, of course, in "The Shadow over Innsmouth."⁶ "Night-Gaunts" (XX) of course employs the entities cited in the earlier *Dream-Quest* and stemming from Lovecraft's boyhood nightmares. "Nyarlathotep" (XXI) seems to be an exact retelling of the prose-poem of 1920, while "Azathoth" (XXII) may provide clues as to the theme of the unfinished tale of 1922. The "thing . . . [with] a silken mask" from "The Elder Pharos" (XXVII) had, of course, made a vivid appearance in the *Dream-Quest*, while "The Dweller" (XXXI) may be retelling the events of the very early "Statement of Randolph Carter" (1919). "Alienation" (XXXII) may perhaps echo the theme of "The Strange High House in the Mist," written only a few months before the writing of the sonnet. Such examples could be multiplied upon additional study.

Lovecraft made, indeed, a very revealing remark soon after completing the *Fungi* sequence: "Some of the themes [expressed in the sonnets] are really more adapted to fiction—so that I shall probably

make stories of them whenever I get that constantly deferred creative opportunity I am always waiting for." Is it possible that "The Book," written at a time when Lovecraft's creative urge may have been at a lull, may be such an attempt to rewrite the *Fungi* into prose?

We know that only the first three of the *Fungi* sonnets are openly linked, although R. Boerem has attempted to find continuity in the whole sequence.⁸ Comparison between "The Book" and the first three sonnets reveals an amazing similarity of theme, plot, and even language; such that we can hardly but conclude that the fragment bears a distinct relation to the sonnets.

The plot of both the prose tale and the poems is that of a man's discovery of a forbidden book (presumably, though not necessarily, the *Necronomicon*) and its effect upon him as he reads it. The setting of "The Book" tallies with that of the *Fungi* sonnet "The Book" (I): in the former we read of a "dimly lighted place near the black, oily river where the mists always swirl."⁹ In the sonnet we read of "old alleys near the quays" (l. 2) and "queer curls of fog" (l. 4). The old bookshop is, in the fragment, "very old" (recall the "old alleys") and "[had] ceiling-high shelves full of rotting volumes." In the sonnet we find "the books, in piles like twisted trees, / Rotting from floor to roof" (II. 6-7). In the fragment the narrator finds the book amidst "great formless heaps of books on the floor and in crude bins"; in the sonnet the narrator "from a cobwebbed heap / Took up the nearest tome and thumbed it through" (II. 9-10).

At this point Lovecraft in the fragment makes a glancing reference to the third sonnet of the *Fungi* sequence, "The Key": "It was a key—a guide—to certain gateways and transitions. . . ." Quickly, however, Lovecraft appears to return to the first and second sonnets, and retells them in order. "I

remember how the old man leered and tittered," says the narrator in the fragment. In the sonnet "The Book" we read

Then, looking for some seller
old in craft,
I could find nothing but a voice
that laughed. (II. 13-14)

The narrator of the fragment then "hurried home through those narrow, winding, mist-choked waterfront streets." In "Pursuit" (II) the narrator is seen "Hurrying through the ancient harbour lanes / With often-turning head and nervous face" (II. 3-4). In the fragment "I had a frightful impression of being stealthily followed by soft padding feet." At this point the verbal correspondence becomes almost exact, for in the sonnet "far behind me, unseen feet were padding" (I. 14). The narrator of the fragment speaks of "the centuried, tottering houses . . . with fishy, eye-like, diamond-paned windows that leered." In the sonnet "Dull, furtive windows in old tottering brick / Peered at me oddly as I hastened by" (II. 5-6).

In the fragment Lovecraft now begins to describe the events as recorded in the third Fungi sonnet, "The Key." In the fragment the narrator "locked [himself] in the attic room. . . . Then came the first scratching and fumbling at the dormer window." Note the last line of the sonnet: "The attic window shook with a faint fumbling."

Here, in the last two paragraphs of the fragment, the correspondence with the Fungi becomes blurred, and may indicate Lovecraft's perplexity as to how to continue the tale, since the rest of the thirty-three sonnets of the Fungi are not, as previously noted, ostensibly linked, at least in terms of plot. Only a few parallels can be drawn. In the fragment the narrator confesses: "Nor could I ever after see the world as I had known it." We are reminded of "Alienation" (XXXII): "He waked that morning as an older man, / And nothing since has looked the same to him"

(II. 9-10). The narrator of the fragment continues: "Every once-familiar object loomed alien in the new perspective brought by my widened sight." In "Alienation" we read:

Objects around float nebulous
and dim—
False, fleeting trifles of some
vaster plan.
His folk and friends are now
an alien throng
To which he struggles vainly
to belong. (II. 11-14)

Later, the narrator of "The Book" recalls: "I was swept by a black wind through gulfs of fathomless grey with the needle-like pinnacles of unknown mountains miles below me. After a while there was utter blackness, and then the light of myriad stars forming strange, alien constellations." This is vaguely reminiscent of "Azathoth" (XXII):

Out of the mindless void the
daemon bore me,
Past the bright clusters of
dimensioned space,
Till neither time nor matter
stretched before me,
But only Chaos, without form
or place. (II. 1-4)

But the resemblance is vague, tenuous, and hardly exact, and the fragment soon ends. Whether Lovecraft simply tired of the attempt to rewrite the Fungi into prose (we may perhaps be thankful that he never fully did so) or whether he found it difficult to string all or even some of the sonnets together into a coherent story, we may never know. Boerem's thesis of a "continuity" in the Fungi sonnets is neither confirmed nor refuted by the above correspondences; for if we accept the theory that "The Book" is an attempt to write out the Fungi in prose, then we must equally accept the possibility that Lovecraft could have written all or some into a tale, or at least conceived the possibility of so doing.

As it is, the fundamental theme of both the fragment and the Fungi sonnets as a whole is that of time—

a central concept in Lovecraft's writing. Throughout the fragment the narrator hints of the new conceptions of time gained from reading the book he has discovered: "At times I feel appalling vistas of years stretching behind me, while at other times it seems as if the present moment were an isolated point in a grey formless infinity. . . . That night I passed the gateway to a vortex of twisted time and vision. . . . Mingled with the present scene was always a little of the past and a little of the future. . . ." All this is expressed—if oftentimes with less a feeling of horror than of exhilaration or "adventurous expectancy"—in the sonnets:

At last the key was mine to
those vague visions
Of sunset spires and twilight
woods that brood
Dim in the gulfs beyond this
earth's precisions,
Lurking as memories of infinity.
(III. 9-12)

The winter sunset . . .
Opens great gates to some forgotten year. . . .
It is a land where beauty's
meaning flowers;
Where every unplaced memory
has a source;
Where the great river Time
begins its course
Down the vast void in starlit
streams of hours.
(XIII. 1, 2, 9-12)

I do not know what land it is
—or dare
Ask when or why I was, or
will be, there.
(XXIII. 13-14)

In that strange light I feel I
am not far
From the fixt mass whose sides
the ages are.
(XXXVI. 13-14)

"The Book," then, while not of great intrinsic interest, typifies Lovecraft's despair at his own ability to write fiction during his later years. Certainly his powers were not failing—rather, the reverse

seems to be the case, if we take "The Shadow out of Time" and the collaboration "The Night Ocean" into consideration. But Lovecraft felt increasingly that "I'm farther from doing what I want to do than I was 20 years ago";¹⁰ the result was a series of experiments dating as early as "The Shadow over Innsmouth,"¹¹ of which "The Book" may represent another example. In his later years Lovecraft confessed that his "right medium" might perhaps be "the cheapened and hackneyed term 'prose-poem';"¹² and perhaps "The Book," its basis drawn from some of Lovecraft's best poetry, is a step in that direction—a direction which Lovecraft perhaps did not achieve fully until his very last work of fiction, the extended prose-poem "The Night Ocean."

NOTES

¹SL I.185.

²Rpt. Dreams and Fancies (1962), pp. 26f. Cf. also SL II.199f.

³The possibility of the text's spuriousness was first suggested to me by David E. Schultz. I am not, however, convinced (as Schultz believes) that the entire text was merely thrown together by Derleth or some other hand: it is still possible that Lovecraft resurrected this dream in 1933 or 1934 and tried to write a story around it.

⁴SL IV.297.

⁵SL IV.289-90. Derleth's dating it to 1937 has no authority at all. Indeed, even the possibility that Lovecraft wrote up the dream at a later time seems refuted by the following letter from Dwyer to Clark Ashton Smith (n.d., but soon after Lovecraft's death): "I sent [Farnsworth] Wright [editor of *Weird Tales*] a short story of his [Lovecraft's] —a dream—never published. . . . I copied it out of an old [my emphasis] letter to me. A very odd little story; I call it 'The Wicked Clergyman.'" (MS., Clark Ashton Smith Coll., John Hay Library.)

⁶Cf. SL V.346.

⁶Frank Utpatel's illustration for the sonnet, depicting the fishy inhabitants of Innsmouth (Collected Poems [1963], p. 123), may be anachronistic, for there is no evidence from the poem that Lovecraft had at this time populated the city with such denizens.

⁷SL III.116-17.

⁸Cf. "The Continuity of the Fungi from Yuggoth," in S. T. Joshi, ed., H. P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism (1980), pp. 222f.

⁹Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (1965), p. 340. All other citations from the fragment are taken from pp. 340-42 of this edition (text corrected from the A.Ms.).

¹⁰SL V.224.

¹¹Cf. SL III.435: "I am using the new [story] idea as a basis for what might be called laboratory experimentation—writing it out in different manners, one after the other, in an effort to determine the mood & tempo best suited to the theme."

¹²SL V.230.

TWO NEW ADVENTURES FROM CRYPTIC PUBLICATIONS

Pulse Pounding Adventure Stories #2 with "The Treasure of Horemkhu" (a Simon of Gitta tale with Lovecraftian links) by Richard L. Tierney; Carl Jacob's "Your Witness, Tuan"; Robert Bloch's "Indian Sign"; and C. J. Henderson's "A Desert Story"; plus a Stephen E. Fabian cover. . . . \$4.50

North of Khyber by Robert E. Howard. Five fragments by the teenage REH, in which he teamed up his characters El Borak and the Sonora Kid. With a Stephen E. Fabian cover. . . . \$5.00

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 43)

Thanks for Crypt #52. I laughed myself silly over the stories by Messrs. Cort and Garofalo. But my nose is a little out of joint because, in your piece on Lovecraft as a fictional character, you did not mention my Willy Newbury story "Balsamo's Mirror." In this, Willy and Lovecraft were translated into the bodies of two 18th-century English rustics. Lovecraft finds that life less glamorous than he had imagined.

The tale appeared in The Purple Pterodactyls but met the kind of misfortune that makes one wonder if the Old Ones have it in for one. The book got excellent reviews, and the first printing of the paperback sold out immediately. But Ace was merging with Berkley, and the mechanics of this process so preoccupied the editors that they forgot to order another printing before the type was scrapped.

P. 56: Lovecraft discussed the pronunciation of "Cthulhu" in letters to Rimel, 7/23/24, and to Fisher, 1/10/37. It is hard to be sure what he meant, since he was grossly ignorant of scientific phonetics. That did not stop him from ghosting Well Bred Speech for Anne Tillery Renshaw in 1936. To any phonetician this little book was a disaster.

From the letters, I think HPL's idea was that while the spelling tried to approximate nonhuman vocal sounds, what he had in mind was something like this, in the International Phonetic Alphabet:

ctɥtɥ

The meanings of the symbols are as follows: c is the palatal voiceless plosive, spelled ty in Hungarian (a sound between k and t); the looped ɥ represents the voiceless lateral fricative, spelled ll in Welsh (prepare to make an l and then blow air through); ɥ stands for the

(continued on page 9)

On "Azathoth"

By Will Murray

In his article, "On 'The Book,'" S. T. Joshi speculates that "... it is conceivable that 'Azathoth' (1922) is a vague adumbration of Lovecraft's later novel, The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926-27)." This is very likely. "Azathoth" is but a fragment, only three paragraphs long, of a Dunsanian dream-fantasy. There is not enough of it to tell a thing about Lovecraft's plans for the work, only that an unnamed man of "the waking world" one night bridges the gulf to other worlds. The fragment ends as this person stands on the first brink of discovery.

In a letter to Frank Belknap Long, dated June 9, 1922, HPL calls "Azathoth" a "weird Vathek-like novel," so we know it was to be of ambitious length. The entity Azathoth later appears in Lovecraft's fiction, and he is a familiar figure, even if he is described only obliquely. And of the aborted novel, the Commonplace Book describes it in one succinct sentence: "A terrible pilgrimage to seek the nighted throne of the far daemon-sultan Azathoth."

This is exactly the plot of Dream-Quest. The dreamer Randolph Carter, in seeking a city he saw in a dream, goes to the castle of the Great Gods in Unknown Kadath to plead with them to be shown the way to this city. This quest takes up the entire novel, and at the end, Nyarlathotep, servant to Azathoth, denies him audience with the terrible daemon-sultan.

Dream-Quest may indeed be a latter-day "Azathoth." Between the fragment and the novel, Lovecraft wrote no Dunsanian dream stories. Virtually every dreamland character and idea is incorporated into Dream-Quest, as if Lovecraft was attempting to recreate the lost mood of his early Dunsanian period.

Thus, we find many references and allusions to Lovecraft's Dunsanian stories. Uithar, Leng, Sarnath and other place-names abound. Richard Pickman from the non-Dunsanian "Pickman's Model" returns, and Randolph Carter is himself a veteran of Dunsanian efforts.

Of course, new place-names appear in profusion, as do new creatures, like gugs, ghaists, red-footed wamps and others. But by and large, there are no new characters of consequence and while there are many digressive allusions to Lovecraft's past dreamland stories, there are almost none of these which can't be traced back to one or more stories HPL had penned in the Twenties.

The two exceptions are interesting. Early in Dream-Quest, there is mention of "the dreamer Sirnath-Ko," the "only fully human person" ever to behold the dark side of the moon. There is no such character mentioned in any extant Lovecraft story, so this reference stands out as unusual. If it was an uncharacteristic bit of extemporaneity, Lovecraft does not expand upon it. That is odd, so odd I suspect a lost Dunsanian story exists with Sirnath-Ko as a significant character. Perhaps he appeared in the still-lost "Life and Death."

The other exception is even more strange. Near the end of Dream-Quest, there is a scene in which Nyarlathotep tells Randolph Carter the following:

When Barzai the Wise climbed Hatheg-Kla to see the Great Ones dance and howl above the clouds in the moonlight he never returned. The Other Gods were there, and they did what was expected. Zenig of Aphorat sought to reach unknown Kadath in the cold waste, and his skull is set in a ring on the

little finger of one whom I need not name.

Barzai the Wise is the protagonist of Lovecraft's "The Other Gods." His name and fate are often mentioned in *Dream-Quest*. But Zenig of Aphorat is a new name. His quest, which sounds like the creative basis of Randolph Carter's quest, is not recorded by Lovecraft. Is this a spontaneous throwaway, or a clue to another lost story?

Or perhaps Lovecraft dredged it from his memory of the planned novel "Azathoth." The protagonist of that fragment is not named, but like the unnamed Londoner who became dreamland's King Kuranis in "Celephais," the unnamed hero of "Azathoth" could hardly have supported an entire novel without being named. It is entirely possible that had "Azathoth" been completed, that dim character might have become Zenig of Aphorat and, in venturing to Unknown Kadath, succeeded where Carter did not in meeting Azathoth. His fate, having his skull set in Azathoth's ring (for the one Nyarlathotep didn't name could only have been him whom Nyarlathotep called "the daemon-sultan whose name no lips dare speak aloud") sounds like an exquisitely Dunsanian story ending. It evokes the image Lovecraft so loved in Dunsany's "Idle Days on the Yann," that of the throne carved from a single piece of ivory. I can easily imagine the "terrible pilgrimage" of the finished "Azathoth" ending with the sardonic image of the protagonist's skull set in the "boundless daemon-sultan's" pinky ring. It would have been perfect. And it would have been poetic of Lovecraft, if *Dream-Quest* is a different approach to "Azathoth," to have subsumed his original ending into the new climax, as seems to be the case.

But, of course, we do not know. "Azathoth" is a mere scrap, and Lovecraft, who curiously never entered the delicious image of Zenig's fate into his *Commonplace Book*,

cannot tell us. But if any ambitious person ever attempts to complete the "Azathoth" fragment, he'd do well to consider this article as he sits at his typewriter and ponders: "How would Lovecraft have done it?"

NOTE

¹An earlier *Commonplace Book* reference reads "AZATHOTH—a hideous name." The origin of this name is unclear. It's very likely, given HPL's penchant for adopting biblical names, that the town of Anathoth, once in what is now Jordan, was the inspiration. If you tip the "n" on its side, you have a "z" and Azathoth. However, there is an "Azoth" mentioned in Theosophical writings (e.g., A. E. Waite's *Azoth: The Star of the East*), and it may have been cobbled with Anathoth to obtaining this coining.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 7)

high front rounded vowel, spelled u in French and Dutch, ü in German, and y in the Scandinavian tongues. The result sounds like the sort of noise one makes when one inadvertently bites into something nasty and tries to get rid of it.

--L. Sprague de Camp
Villanova, PA

Whereas I agree with Mr. Dzielanowicz's opinions regarding Mr. Rainey's excellent "Threnody," I found his surmise of the work of Mr. Wilum Pugmire's fiction overall quite unprobing and slight—he fails to analyze the work of Mr. Pugmire in its full form, as well as neglecting to try to truly understand the emotional depth in which his tales take their originality. As opposed to certain other Mythos pastiches which are wholly uninspired and resound hollow in everything but a somewhat bland and unoriginal plot, Mr. Pugmire is thorough in the
(continued on page 17)

On "The Descendant"

By S. T. Joshi

We know less about "The Descendant" than about any other single story or fragment by Lovecraft. The title was supplied by R. H. Barlow; the date of 1926 was supplied by August Derleth and, although apparently roughly accurate, is entirely conjectural. Lovecraft never mentions the fragment in any correspondence seen by me. Whereas we can guess that "Azathoth" may be an early adumbration of The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath, and "The Book" in part a rewriting of the Fungi from Yuggoth,¹ we have no idea what "The Descendant" is about or where it is going. It is Lovecraft's most unsatisfying yet most tantalizing piece.

How Derleth arrived at the date of the work, I have no idea; perhaps Lovecraft mentioned it in his correspondence to Derleth, but I have not found the citation. The date of 1926 seems right, based on the handwriting of the manuscript (John Hay Library) and internal evidence; certainly it cannot be any earlier than 1923 or later than about 1930.

The very text of the fragment is confused. Editions previous to mine (Dagon and Other Macabre Tales, rev. ed. 1986, pp. 358-62) printed an introductory paragraph or fragment: "Writing on what the doctor tells me is my deathbed, my most hideous fear is that the man is wrong. I suppose I shall seem to be buried next week, but . . ." When this was printed in Marginalia, Derleth added the note: "[foregoing deleted]." It was indeed crossed out on the ms., but what Derleth did not explain is that when Lovecraft began "The Descendant" proper ("In London there is a man who screams . . .") he turned the pa-

per around, so that the "deleted" paragraph is now at the bottom of the first page of the ms., upside down. This—along with the apparently unrelated nature of the paragraph—led me to believe that it does not belong with "The Descendant" at all; I have accordingly removed it from my text. The deleted paragraph is in the first person, while the fragment proper is in the third; and the "I" does not seem to represent either character of the fragment, Lord Northam or "young Williams." My inclination is to regard the deleted paragraph as yet another, separate fragment.

This still does not allow us to make much sense of "The Descendant" as it stands. Let us see what internal evidence provides in terms of dating and content. The mention of a "Nameless City" in the "desert of Araby" at the very end of the fragment clearly points to his own tale of 1921. The mentions of Charles Fort and Ignatius Donnelly seem promising, but not much can be made of them: we do not know when Lovecraft read Donnelly's The Story of Atlantis (1882); as to Charles Fort, we learn that around September 1927 Lovecraft read New Lands, but "didn't find it as interesting as The Book of the Damned" (SL 11.174), which he must have read earlier.

More may be gleaned from the character of Lord Northam, the harried old man who has only one goal in life: "All he seeks from life is not to think." Some external features of his characterization bring Arthur Machen and Lord Dunsany to mind, although in a very superficial way. Northam lives at Gray's Inn, London; Machen lived for many years at 4 Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn

(this is what gives us the terminus post quem of 1923, since Lovecraft only encountered the work of Machen at this date). Northam is the "nineteenth Baron of a line whose beginnings went uncomfortably far back into the past"; Dunsany was the eighteenth Baron Dunsany in a line founded in the twelfth century.

Much of the fragment spins a peculiar tale about strange happenings in Roman Britain. Here the most interesting point is how many things Lovecraft gets wrong in his historical account. The biggest blunder is his mention of "the Third Augustan Legion then stationed at Lindum." Regrettably, Legio III Augusta was never stationed in England (it was almost always in Libya); rather, it was Legio II Augusta that was in England; and it was not, as far as I know, ever stationed in Lindum (Lincoln), but always in Isca Silurum (Caerleon-on-Usk), something Lovecraft should have known from reading Machen's Hill of Dreams. Lovecraft made the same mistake in "The Rats in the Walls" (1923), where he says that the legion camped at "Anchester." Lovecraft has here made three mistakes in one: (1) neither the second nor the third Augustan legion was ever stationed in Anchester because (2) the town never had a legionary fort, and (3) the town's name is Ancaster, not Anchester! (For the record, two other legions, IX Hispana and XX Valeria, were customarily stationed in England, at York and Chester, respectively. Other legions were transferred there as needed during revolts or to build Hadrian's Wall. Interestingly enough, IX Hispana seems to have vanished around A.D. 130, and to this day no satisfactory explanation of its disappearance has been made. Now there's a story idea for Lovecraft!) By 1933, however, when he read Arthur Weigall's Wanderings in Roman Britain, Lovecraft finally got the legions in Roman Britain straight (cf. SL IV. 293).

Well, I think I have squeezed

"The Descendant" dry; there does not seem anything more to be got out of it. If written in 1926, it may have been written early in the year, when Lovecraft was still in New York: he frequently confessed to his inability to write fiction toward the end of his "New York exile." The Roman aspect is interesting in providing a link between "The Rats in the Walls" and Lovecraft's great "Roman dream" of 1927; and the scene where young Williams buys the Necronomicon from a "gnarled old Levite" is uncannily similar to the scene in "The Book" (c. 1933) where the nameless narrator buys a nameless tome from an "old man [who] leered and tittered." We would like very much to know what Lovecraft was trying to do with "The Descendant"; it embodies central themes in his work—dubious heredity, ancient horror, a Faustian quest for forbidden knowledge—but never resolves them. It is one of Lovecraft's few false starts; and yet, we can learn something even from its unsatisfying paragraphs.

NOTE

¹See my "On 'The Book,'" Nyctalops, 3, No. 4 (April 1983), 9-13, reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

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"The Thing in the Moonlight"

A HOAX REVEALED

By David E. Schultz

The authorship of H. P. Lovecraft's "The Thing in the Moonlight" has recently come under the skeptical scrutiny of Lovecraft scholars. The story first appeared in January 1941 in the amateur publication *Bizarre*¹ edited by Jack Chapman Miske of Cleveland, Ohio. No information was provided about the hitherto unknown Lovecraft story. The story was later included in several Arkham House publications, including *Marginalia* (1944), *Dreams and Fancies* (1962), *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales* (1963), and *The Arkham Collector* (Winter 1969).² August Derleth dated this short piece to 1934 and dubbed it a "fragment" in *Dagon*.

The text of "The Thing in the Moonlight" is suspiciously similar to that of a letter by Lovecraft to Donald Wandrei dated 24 November 1927.³ Indeed, the only difference between the story and the letter are the opening and closing paragraphs. The authorship of those paragraphs first came under question because of the following statement from the story:

My name is Howard Phillips. I live at 66 College Street, in Providence, Rhode Island. On November 24, 1927—for I know not even what the year may be now—, I fell asleep and dreamed, since when I have been unable to awaken.⁴

The address is, of course, Lovecraft's address from May 1933 until 1937. The mention of his final address is probably the reason that "The Thing in the Moonlight" has been dated to 1934. It seems unlikely that Lovecraft at some time after 1933 would have been able to

recall word for word the description of a dream from a letter written six years earlier. And by what coincidence would Lovecraft have mentioned in his tale the exact date of a letter in which the same story was recounted?

The structure of the story itself casts suspicion upon its authorship. The development and treatment are distinctly unsatisfying. The story is much shorter than other of Lovecraft's stories from the Thirties. Furthermore, the opening and closing paragraphs are much shorter than the paragraphs constituting the body of the story.

The answer to this puzzle is found in two letters to Derleth from the editor of *Bizarre*. In a letter dated 17 June 1940, Miske wrote "Wandrei has sent me two splendid story-letters of HPL's, and the longest is appearing in the current S-S. . . . The other will be in the first printed number, of *Bizarre*."⁵ Miske was referring to the piece he titled "The Very Old Folk," from Lovecraft's letter of 2 November 1927 to Wandrei⁶ that appeared in the summer 1940 number of *Scienti-Snaps*. Miske later wrote to Derleth:

You may be interested in something I noticed while reading HPL's *Marginalia*. The sketch, "The Thing in the Moonlight," was not so written by HPL. The first couple of paragraphs and the last one or two were added by me when I published it in *Bizarre*, in order to do away with some of the otherwise fragmentary effect of the piece.⁷

Jack Miske was probably a "posthu-

mous collaborator" with Lovecraft before Derleth thought to coin the term. Oddly enough, although Derleth knew that Lovecraft was not the sole author of "The Thing in the Moonlight," he neither excised the spurious paragraphs for later printings, nor pointed out that Miske had had a hand in the story. Indeed, further printing of the piece as fiction by Lovecraft was unwarranted, which might also be said of other excerpts from letters such as "Old Bugs," "The Very Old Folk," and "The Evil Clergyman." Since "The Thing in the Moonlight" is nothing more than an excerpt from a letter that was later amended by another writer, it should not be regarded as a work from Lovecraft's pen, but merely as a curiosity of the fan press.

NOTES

¹Initially called Scienti-Snaps.

²Its appearance in The Arkham Collector was particularly odd because it was "completed" by Brian Lumley.

³Cf. Selected Letters II (1968), pp. 199-200.

⁴Dagon, p. 342.

⁵Ms. State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

⁶Cf. Selected Letters II, pp. 189-197. This appearance of Lovecraft's Roman dream as a letter to Bernard Austin Dwyer. Lovecraft mentions the version he sent to Wandrei in his letter of 24 November. Frank Belknap Long incorporated the version of the dream that he received from Lovecraft into his novel, The Horror from the Hills, with Lovecraft's blessing.

⁷Miske to Derleth, 28 June 1946 (ms. State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

No more Lovecraft films from Stuart Gordon, says Rave Reviews editor Marc A. Cerasini, who reports that Gordon has instead signed a multipicture contract with Disney. (Hm... Splash II with Daryl Hannah as a Deep One?)

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 44)

sort of hobby out of enumerating various Hebrew and pseudo-cabalistic names and words according to the well-known but much derided practice of gematria (Hebrew numerology as applied to sacred writings). It was a time-passing mind game, like anagrams or palindromes. When I had quite a few of these, I typed it all up in manuscript form and sent it off to a publisher in St. Paul who dealt in such things. Much to my surprise, it was accepted, and it finally appeared in print in 1978 as Godwin's Cabalistic Encyclopedia (not my choice of title). So that's the secret of my "knowledge" of cabalism—all self-acquired and limited to gematria and the modern occultist interpretation. No sooner had the book appeared, than I began to realize that my quasi-hippie mystical leanings of the 70s were delusion and hogwash. Without knowing anything of Lovecraft's materialistic philosophy, I began to lean in that direction myself and even wound up subscribing to The Skeptical Inquirer. I'd have to class myself at present as an existentialist agnostic, if there is such a thing.

But now I suffer from a shadowy sort of guilt for having added to the endless mountains of dreck that are continually absorbed by true believers in what is now referred to as New Age Science!

But old habits die hard, even if their object is not taken seriously. Hence my recent letter concerning Dagon and hence my observation that Cthulhu, transposed into Hebrew letters, enumerates to 467—a number shared by nothing else at all that I've yet stumbled upon. You could always subtract 360, the number of degrees in a circle, to arrive at 107, as in 107 East James Street, but I've wasted enough of your time. I'd just like to apologize to anyone who ever bought the book and to the public in general for foisting off yet another arcane

(continued on page 22)

Where Was the Place of Dagon?

By Will Murray

Among the Lovecraftian fragments used by August Derleth in his Cthulhu Mythos novel *The Lurker at the Threshold* was a segment HPL had called, "Of Evill Sorceries Done in New-England of Daemons in No Humane Shape." The fragment is written in Puritan-style English and purports to be a piece of a report of strange doings in Puritan Massachusetts during the time of Governor Bradford.

The fragment, which was first published as Lovecraft wrote it back in *Crypt of Cthulhu* #6, focuses on a man,

"... One Richard Billington, being instructed partly by evill Books, and partly by an antient Wonder-Worker amongst the Indian Salvages, so fell away from good Christian Practice that he not only lay'd claim to Immortality in the flesh, but sett up in the Woods a Place of Dagon, namely [a] great Ring of Stones, inside which he say'd prayers to the Devill, and sung certain Rites of Magick abominable by Scripture.

The fragment goes on to relate that Richard Billington had been eaten by some thing which he had called down from the sky during a rite at the Ring of Stones, and that the thing was a toadlike spirit known as Ossadogowah. The Indian wise man, Misquamacus, who had taught Billington some of his secrets, then imprisoned Ossadogowah near the ring of stones under a mound around which no vegetation would grow.

For reasons known only to him, Derleth made several striking changes in this fragment before he incorporated it, along with other fragments, into his novel. One of

the most puzzling was the alteration of the location of the "Place of Dagon" from New Plymouth to New Dunnich. New Dunnich is obviously a phonetic rendering of the proper British way of pronouncing Dunwich, which is of course one of Lovecraft's most famous Massachusetts locales.

There is no New Dunnich mentioned in any of Lovecraft's stories. Nor is New Plymouth mentioned. At first glance Lovecraft's naming of a new Massachusetts seat of horror might indicate he was planning at one point to move the Mythos from the common Arkham/Dunwich/Inns-mouth/Kingsport locales to other imaginary places. There is no New Plymouth listed in contemporary maps of Massachusetts, and Derleth may have assumed that New Plymouth was a mythical place-name—which still does not explain why he felt constrained to change the name.

Lovecraft's fragment is no mere concoction. Its style, setting, erratic capitalization, and even subject matter—a strange man who consorts with Indians and builds a Place of Dagon—are taken from an actual historical incident with which Lovecraft was familiar.

As I related in my article, "Dagon in Puritan Massachusetts," (*Lovecraft Studies*, Vol. IV, No. 2, Fall 1985) in 1627, during the governorship of John Endicott, an adventurer named Thomas Morton took over the failing Mount Wollaston settlement in the town of Quincy, Massachusetts. Contrary to the strict Puritan laws, Morton, under the guise of running a fur-trading post, consorted with Indians, selling them liquor and guns, and in contravention of the Puritans' dour distaste for humor, changed the sober name of Mount

Wollaston to Merry Mount. Morton also revived the pagan Druidic custom of dancing around the May pole. He built one atop Merry Mount, overlooking the sea. Calling himself "The Lord of Misrule," he formed what seems to be almost a Puritan version of a hippie commune, complete with Free Love and all the trappings.

The Puritan fathers in Plymouth were outraged by all this. They could not ignore it because the Indians had taken to murdering settlers with the guns Morton provided. So Governor Endicott sent a company of soldiers, led by Miles Standish, to break up the settlement and tear down the May pole. Which they did.

Morton was sent back to England by boat, and although he was later to return to the colonies, he was never again the wild and crazy guy he had been at Merry Mount.

After the May pole had been taken down, the area was shunned and, as a recognition of the place of ill repute it had been, for some years afterward the Puritans called it "Mounte-Dagon." Or Mount Dagon. Obviously, they took the name from biblical references to idolatry that haunted the name of Dagon as it appeared in the Bible.

It seems clear that Lovecraft's Richard Billington was inspired by Thomas Morton. Although Morton was never accused of sorcery as such, his paganism and consorting with Indians is analogous to Billington's alleged deeds. And his building of a Stonehenge-like ring of stones is certainly as Druidic as the May pole.

Does this mean that the Place of Dagon Lovecraft mentions is identical with Mount Dagon? And does the name New Plymouth, then, really mask the reality of Quincy, the birthplace of two presidents, the first railroad, the first Dunkin Donuts and the Howard Johnson chain? [And the home of Will Murray himself] --Ed.]

No, it is not. And even mid-westerner August Derleth seems to have understood the source of the

fragment. He was familiar with Morton and the whole Mount Dagon episode. This can be deduced from the title Derleth gave to another Lovecraft fragment used in *Lurker at the Threshold*, entitled "Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New-English Canaan," which Derleth credited, whimsically enough, to the "Reverend Ward Phillips, Pastor of the Second Church of Arkham." Lovecraft had not titled the second fragment, which concerned supernatural manifestations in Duxbury circa 1684, nor is that title, supposedly of a Puritan book, mentioned anywhere by Lovecraft.

But a Puritan era book actually called The New English Canaan does exist. It was authored by no less than Thomas Morton after his return to the colonies. It was a combination memoir and apology for the Mount Dagon episode, in which Morton attempts to explain away many of the stories and rumors of idolatry that hung over his activities. Some of his explanations may be specious, but the odor of the supernatural permeates this book. Moreover, it was written in a style carefully copied by Lovecraft for his "Evill Sorceries" fragment.

Derleth obviously understood all of this, which is why he evoked The New English Canaan in The *Lurker at the Threshold*. As pointed out in my Lovecraft Studies article, the Mount Dagon episode seems to have made a profound imprint upon the collective consciousness of Puritan Massachusetts. Several years after Morton was exiled, certain Bostonians were buried under headstones—carved by an unidentifiable stonemason—which sported twin fish-tailed creatures believed to be representations of Dagon. Speculation as to why only this dozen or so stones in the greater Boston burying grounds bear the Dagon image has never produced a concrete conclusion—although one theory has it that even after Mount Wollaston was abandoned and its inhabitants were scattered or absorbed into the Puritan mainstream, there continued to

exist a secret society or "underground" which clung stubbornly to Morton's free-thinking philosophy.

The Merry Mount incident clearly impressed Lovecraft. It was a perfect example of the dark side of Puritanism he found so fascinating. It also, incidentally, inspired one of Lovecraft's favorite contemporary horror novels, Herbert Gorman's The Place Called Dagon (George H. Doran Company, 1927), which focused on a surviving witch cult in the mythical Western Massachusetts communities of Leeminster and Marlboro, west of the Connecticut River. Gorman also cites the Thomas Morton incident in his book, as did Fred Chappell decades later in his similar book, Dagon.

In fact, it may well be that the wording of Lovecraft's "Place of Dagon" was inspired by the title of Gorman's novel more than anything else. For when Lovecraft uses the term, he is not referring to a place-name, despite the use of capital letters (the Puritans capitalized words seemingly at random, as the "Evill Sorceries" fragment so faithfully reflects), but to the pagan god, as he would later do with the Esoteric Order of Dagon. Lovecraft's use of the Philistine fish-god in the 1917 short story, "Dagon," and the 1931 "Shadow over Innsmouth" are specific references to the god and, at least in the second story, is a Cthulhu Mythos trapping. The Puritan usage in the "Evill Sorceries" fragment simply refers to a place of shame or idolatry in the colloquial or biblical sense and has nothing to do with Philistine mythology. Since later in the fragment Lovecraft also mentions Sadogowah, an Algonquized version of Clark Ashton Smith's toad god, Tsathoggua, he was no doubt planning to splice the Cthulhu Mythos connotations of Dagon to the Puritans' biblical meaning.

We may never know why Lovecraft, as a teenager, leapt upon the name of Dagon for one of his earliest supernatural horror stories. From the Bible, perhaps, although it would seem that the biblical ref-

erences to Dagon are too weak to spark a powerful story like "Dagon." It might be that Lovecraft was so taken by the sinister name Mount-Dagon in early reading about Morton's career that he was led to investigate the origin of the name, and liking what he found, used it.

But there is another possible source—a bizarre one. As it turns out, Dagon is also a word found in the Algonquin Indian language—the same language out of which Lovecraft concocted the name of the infamous Miskatonic River and from which Misquamacus, the name of the Indian wizard who is also mentioned in the "Evill Sorceries" fragment, is derived.

Actually, the word "dagon" does not appear by itself. It is half of a mysterious construction, Sagon-dagon. Its true meaning is unknown, according to every reference I've consulted. Sagon-dagon is, appropriately enough, the Indian place-name for Maine's Newport Lake, now called Sebasticook Lake. It can be found on the map near Bangor.

According to Fannie Hardy Eckstorm's Indian Place-Names of the Penobscot Valley and the Maine Coast, Sagon-dagon may be another name for the place-name Nala-bong-an, itself a difficult-to-translate word which might mean "long, level, still water." She also theorizes that Sagon-dagon may be a corruption of akkadegen, meaning "it is level," or sageoei onigen, which means "an ancient portage." Eckstorm rejects the name Sagwai-ah-wangan, "the Old Route" as a possible source.

Apparently, the word "dagon" does not appear by itself in the Algonquian language, at least as a place-name. In fact, place-names beginning with the consonant "d" are extremely rare in New England Indian lore. (Although I do note the place-name, Daaquam, which means "thy beaver," which is not much help.) Thus, the Algonquin meaning of "dagon" is an impenetrable mystery.

It's a wonderful coincidence—if such it is—that the name should be present in pre-Colonial New England, and associated with water as well. If Lovecraft knew of this fact, he must have been tickled by it, because he loved to show in his stories that his entities and concepts were universally known by primitive man, who called them by (sometimes only slightly) different names and cloaked their reality behind conflicting legends.

So where was the Place of Dagon?

This is where August Derleth's puzzling name change seems especially dubious. New Plymouth is the early name given to the town of Plymouth, the seat of Massachusetts government in the Puritan days and the site of the landing of the Mayflower and Plymouth Rock. The early settlers called it New Plymouth to distinguish it from old Plymouth, in old England. The hidden irony in Lovecraft's fragment was that after Governor Endicott sent Miles Standish up to Quincy from Plymouth to quench the fires of paganism lit by Thomas Morton, Plymouth was plagued by a Thomas Morton of its own in the person of Richard Billington, and cursed by its own version of Mount Dagon, far worse than a simple seaside hill crowned by a May pole topped by buck antlers.

Derleth seemed aware of the Puritan practice of calling New England versions of old English towns "New" this and "New" that. In *The Lurker at the Threshold*, he wrote ". . . it might well be presumed that the superstitions of that time still lingered among the credulous people, cleric as well as lay, when they lived in the country around Duxbury and 'New Dunnich' which, surely, must be the place known as Dunwich, and thus in the neighbourhood." The "neighbourhood" is that which, in the opening paragraph of this novel, Derleth styles as "North of Arkham." Incredibly, Derleth has, through a simple re-naming, relocated Dunwich from its rural western Massachusetts seat to

the South Shore of that state. More incredibly, Plymouth is not north of the Salem area, which is the accepted locale of Arkham, but south!

And if further proof of this belief is needed, I should point out that the town of Duxbury, which is also mentioned in the *Thaumaturgical Prodiges* fragment as a place where odd doings occurred in Puritan times, is only a few miles up the coast from Plymouth.

It's unfortunate that Lovecraft never finished "Of Evil Sorceries," because it indicates that he was about to break ground in a new corner of the Cthulhu Mythos, moving it away from Dunwich to the west and Arkham and Kingsport and Innsmouth to the north, to Plymouth by the sea—a place which might be called the lost city of the Cthulhu Mythos.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 9)

production of his tales, be they simple or not, in that they are full of hideously simple hints and portents to the true nature of his creation, the Sesqua Valley. This creation, Mr. Pugmire has made from a part of himself, and part of everything he sees and feels, thus rendering his stories the truest art imaginable.

--Shawn Ramsey
Anderson, IN

I especially liked Bruce J. Bal-four's charming "Christmas with Uncle Lovecraft." It was a wonderful idea, and the story had an unexpected note of poignancy. Guy Cowlshaw's witty cover was also a real treat.

To that collector of quotes and eminent elucidationist, Mr. Lin Carter, I pass along one of my favorite sayings. It's the epigraph of David Rabe's play *Sticks and Bones*, and it really impressed me when I read it there. The quote is from, of all people, Sonny Liston: "Life a funny thing." It

(continued on page 33)

Faulty Memories & "Evill Sorceries"

By Robert M. Price

August Derleth's novel *The Lurker at the Threshold* has often been mistakenly attributed to H. P. Lovecraft (a misunderstanding to which Derleth did not seem strongly averse) because Derleth used some fragments and notes left unfinished by Lovecraft, incorporating some of this material verbatim. Derleth claimed to have based his story on two sets of Lovecraft's notes concerning a "round tower" and "a rose window." We will see that it is not quite so simple a picture. Instead, Derleth may be shown to have taken the main direction of the story from other Lovecraftian sources, and to have pretty much disregarded the interesting plot suggestions left in Lovecraft's notes.

In his *Some Notes on H. P. Lovecraft* (1959), Derleth reproduced the fragments he used, indicating most of the relatively minor changes he made incorporating them into *The Lurker at the Threshold*. Yet even Derleth's "purified" version of the original texts is not quite accurate. (The reader is advised at this point to refer to the corrected text of Lovecraft's fragments at the end of this article.)

The first thing to be noted is that there are three distinct fragments, not two as Derleth claimed. And whereas Derleth had admitted that the fragments about the round tower and the rose window were only possibly connected, these two would seem to be the most closely related, since both contain very similar descriptions of a cylindrical tower. The burial mound in "Evill Sorceries," by contrast, is only vaguely reminiscent of the tower in either fragment. And not only does "Evill Sorceries" have nothing to do with either "The Round Tower" or "The Rose Window," it is composed of two separate anecdotes. Derleth does break them up in *Lurker*, but

he connects them in theme (making the bat-thing of the second anecdote the bastard offspring of Richard Billington, the subject of the first anecdote). And he attributes the second anecdote to a completely different book of his own devising, *Thaumaturgicall Prodigies in the New-English Canaan; By the Rev. Ward Phillips, Pastor of the Second Church in Arkham, in the Massachusetts-Bay - Boston, 1697*, a title he erroneously ascribes to Lovecraft, making "Evill Sorceries, etc.," into a mere chapter of the former. Derleth seems in general to have had trouble recalling just who created what title. He was also in the habit of crediting himself as the creator of *Cultes des Goules*, though actually it was Robert Bloch's.

Textual matters aside, it is apparent that Derleth's physical description of the round tower (the ultimate origin of which would seem to be the "Old Stone Mill" or "Viking Tower" in Newport, Rhode Island) in *Lurker* owes more to "The Round Tower" than to "The Rose Window." Its sealing with the Elder Sign and its function of imprisoning a demon obviously derive from "Evill Sorceries." Interestingly, in none of the fragments is the tower depicted as on an island in the Miskatonic as Derleth has it. "The Round Tower" provided the detail of the dried-up tributary of the Miskatonic, but in this fragment the tower actually stood in the riverbed and had once been under water. The location on an island in the river comes, surprisingly, from "The Colour out of Space," where we read of "the small island in the Miskatonic where the devil held court beside a curious stone altar older than the Indians."

Who built the tower? According to "The Round Tower," "it was built by [the] Old Ones (shapeless

& gigantic amphibia)." Accordingly, it is "supposed to be older than mankind." Another example, then, of Lovecraft's oft-used device of prehuman artifacts. But Derleth dropped this conception in *Lurker*, substituting for it the more prosaic expedient of having the tower built by Alijah Billington in the 1700s. As Lovecraft conceived the plot, it would have largely paralleled "The Nameless City." Like that city, the tower is the tip of a subterranean city (it extends downward indefinitely and connects with caverns where the Old Ones still dwell unbeknownst to men). And the tower, like the Nameless City, is the subject of frightful legends of foolhardy explorers.

Derleth is somewhat more faithful to the fragment "Evill Sorceries." Of course, he does include most of it verbatim, including the reference to "Ossadogowah," the "child of Sadogowah." It is plain, however, from this passage that for Lovecraft, the "lurker at the threshold" would have been this "Son of Tsathoggua." Derleth brushes this entity aside in favor of Yog-Sothoth. In one place he says the ancient Indian sorcerer Misquamacus was simply wrong, having mistaken Yog-Sothoth for Ossadogowah. As for the description of Ossadogowah, Derleth has slightly altered Lovecraft's description, adding that when it was "big and cloudy" it had a face full of serpentine tentacles. He does not indicate this change when purporting to give Lovecraft's original in *Some Notes on H. P. Lovecraft*. It becomes obvious that Derleth simply lifted the Lovecraft sections out of the text of *Lurker*, changes and all, instead of going back to HPL's original notes. He did not quite recall all the differences between the two versions.

Something else in the "Evill Sorceries" fragment that deserves mention is the implicit parallel with "The Mound." In both cases, what appears to be an Indian burial mound is a cover for something else, a survival or invader from

the elder world which will spell death for anyone whose curiosity has led him to do some exploring.

Regarding the appended anecdote concerning the bat-creature, which Derleth incorporates to no real purpose, we may point out two interesting parallels elsewhere in the Lovecraft canon. "The monstrous Bat with a human Face" was "brought out of the Woods near Candlemas of 1863." This is reminiscent of the backwoods birth of goatlike Wilbur Whateley ("The Dunwich Horror") at Candlemas, having been conceived nine months earlier in an occult rite at Roodmas. And something similar is implied in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, wherein the Roodmas invocation of Yog-Sothoth will cause "ye thing [to] breede in ye Outside Spheres," presumably to be born nine months later at Candlemas. Indeed, there is some reason to interpret Joseph Curwen's ultimate design as being the same as Wizard Whateley's—to unleash Yog-Sothoth upon the world, threatening "all civilization, all natural law, perhaps even the fate of the solar system and the universe" (*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*). Perhaps something similar was in view in "Evill Sorceries," with the birth of the bat-thing. And though *The Lurker at the Threshold* does show the influence of "The Dunwich Horror," almost nothing is made of the monstrous birth of the bat-hybrid. It is mentioned only vestigially, having no real significance in terms of the plot. This is too bad since Lovecraft's brief note was "pregnant" with horrific potential.

Finally, here are Lovecraft's original fragments, transcribed by S. T. Joshi:

THE ROUND TOWER

S. of Arkham is cylindrical tower of stone with conical roof—perhaps 12 feet across & 20 ft. high. There has been a great arched opening (_____ up?), but it is sealed with masonry. The thing rises

from the bottom of a densely wooded ravine once the bed of an extinct tributary of the Miskatonic. Whole region feared & shunned by rustics. Tales of fate of persons climbing into tower before opening was sealed. Indian legends speak of it as existing as long as they could remember—supposed to be older than mankind. Legend that it was built by Old Ones (shapeless & gigantic amphibia) & that it was once under the water. Dressed stone masonry shews odd & unknown technique. Geometrical designs on large stone above sealed opening utterly baffling. Supposed to house a treasure or something which Old Ones value highly. Possibly nothing of interest to human beings. Rumours that it connects with hidden caverns where water still exists. Perhaps Old Ones still alive. Base seems to extend indefinitely downward—ground level having somewhat risen. Has not been seen for ages, since everyone shuns the ravine.

OF EVILL SORCERIES DONE IN NEW ENGLAND OF DAEMONS IN NO HUMANE SHAPE

"But, not to speak at too great Length upon so horrid a Matter, I will add onlie what is commonly reported concerning an Happening in New Plymouth, fifty Years since, when Mr. Bradford was Governour. 'Tis said, one Richard Billington, being instructed partly by evil Books, and partly by an antient Wonder-Worker amongst the Indian Salvages, so fell away from good Christian Practice that he not only lay'd claim to Immortality in the Flesh, but sett up in the Woods a Place of Dagon, namely [a] great Ring of Stones, inside which he say'd Prayers to the Divell, and sung certain Rites of Magick abominable by Scripture. This being brought to the Notice of the Magistrates, he deny'd all blasphemous Dealings; but not long after he privately shew'd great Fear about some Thing he had call'd out of the

Sky at Night. There were in that year seven slayings in the Woods near to Richard Billington's Stones, those slain being crushed and half-melted in a Fashion outside all Experience. Upon Talk of a Tryall, Billington dropt out of Sight, nor was any clear word of him ever after heard.

"Two months from then, by Night, there was heard a Band of Wampanaug Salvages howling and singing in the Woods; and it appeared, they took down the Ring of Stones and did much besides. For their head Man Misquamacus, that same antient Wonder-Worker of whom Billington had learnt some of his Sorceries, came shortly into the town and told Mr. Bradford some strange Things: namely, that Billington had done worse Evill than cou'd be well repair'd, and that he had no doubt eat up by what he had call'd out of the Sky. That there was no Way to send back that Thing he had summon'd, so the Wampanaug wise Men had caught and prison'd it where the Ring of Stones had been.

"They had digg'd a Hole three Ells deep and two across, and had thither charmed the Daemon with Spells that they knew; covering it over with Great Rocks and setting on Top a flat Stone carved with what they call'd the Elder Sign. On this they made a Mound of the Earth digg'd from the Pit, sticking on it a tall Stone carv'd with a Warning. The old Salvage affirm'd, this mound must on no Account be disturb'd, lest the Daemon come loose again which it wou'd if the bury'd flatt Stone with the Elder Sign shou'd get out of Place. On being ask'd what the Daemon look'd like, he gave a very curious and circumstantial Relation, saying it was sometimes small and solid, like a great Toad the Bigness of a Ground-Hog, but sometimes big and cloudy, without any Shape at all.

"It had the Name Ossadagowah, which signifys the child of Sadogowah; the last a frightfull Spirit spoke of by old Men as coming down from the Stars and being

formerly worshipt in Lands to the North. The Wampanaugs, and Nansetts and Nahiggansetts, knew how to draw it out of the Sky, but never did so because of the exceeding great Evilness of it. They knew also how to catch and prison it, tho' they cou'd not send it back whence it came. It was however declar'd, that the old Tribes of Lamah, who dwelt under the Great Bear and were antiently destroy'd for their Wickedness, knew how to manage it in all Ways. Many upstart Men pretended to a Knowledge of such antient Secrets, but none in these Parts cou'd give any Proof of truly having it. It was say'd by some, that Ossadogowah often went back to the Sky from choice without any sending, but that he cou'd not come back unless summon'd.

"This much the antient Wizard Misquamacus told to Mr. Bradford, and ever after a great Mound in the Woods near the Pond southwest of New-Plymouth hath been straitly lett alone. The tall Stone is these Twenty years gone, but the Mound is mark'd by the Circumstance, that nothing, neither Grass nor Brush, will grow upon it. Grave Men doubt that the evill Billington was eat up, as the Salvages believe, by what he call'd out of the Sky; notwithstanding certain Reports of the Idle, of his being since seen in divers places, and that no longer ago than the late monstrous Witchcrafts in Essex-County, in the Year 1692.

* * *

But in respect of generall Infamy, no Report more terrible hath come to Notice, than of what Goodwife Doten, Relict of John Doten of Duxbury in the Old Colonie, brought out of the Woods near Candlemas of 1683. She affirm'd, and her good neighbors likewise, that it had been borne that which was neither Beast nor Man, but like to a monstrous Bat with humane Face. The which was burnt by Order of the High-Sheriff on the 5th of June in the Year 1684.

[THE ROSE WINDOW]

Rumours about nameless evil in the house before legatee's ancestors bought it in 1758. Nothing definite—villagers dislike to talk of it. Builder probably Edward Crane who lived much in Europe. Mysteriously rich. Disappeared 1723—house long vacant and shunned.

Very ancient house on Central Hill, Kingsport inherited. Thick walls—date circa 1700 (some parts older). Labyrinthine plan. He has often visited it and felt an odd fear, especially in high-oak-panelled library, but ancestors have never shewn fear. Hard to figure what lies beyond library's N. wall. (Staircase and cupboards.) During repairs, plane wooden front comes off triangular pediment of huge, built-in bookcase in library's N. wall, revealing strangely carved surface with convex glass circle 7" diameter in centre. This was original surface, later covered over.// House a very early classical specimen//case 9 ft high 8 ft wide small step-ladder used for top shelves//circle 8 ft above floor//legatee Dudley Ropes Glover//

Carving very baffling. Possibly just classical conventional designs, possibly something else. Disquieting resemblance under certain lights to huge octopus-like thing—yet not like anything of earth—of which glass circle is a huge, single central eye. Signs in corners of pediment uncomfortably familiar. Glass itself also baffling. Opaque—evidently convex mirror like many in old houses—but curiously devoid of reflective power. Also too high up to reflect anything but top of room. What one sees in it is generally only cloudy light. This light seems to shift oddly, and one acquires a perverse tendency to keep staring at the thing as if one expected something to appear. Suggestion of self-luminousness at night. Cleaning does no good. Owner decides to let it alone. Moves in.

In back garden, ruins of a brick tower 12 ft in diameter. Rumours of evil annual use—lights—signalling

--answered. Doorway now bricked up. Ivy-clad. Windowless--30 ft standing--once 50 with windows and flat railed roof.

Told by father?

Stimulates hereditary memory. Is lens, prism, or mirror reflecting vision from other dimension or dimensions--time or space. Or rather, reflecting obscure rays not of vision but operating on vestigial and forgotten extra senses. Constructed by outside Entities in effort to inspect human world--or rather, const. by elder wizard under their direction.

Outer beings peer through it. Influence humans by opening up other senses and dimension-perceptions possibly including hereditary memory. Explains odd dreams of strange horror. Also works through dreams.

Principal effect, perhaps, to hold the attention and make mind susceptible to outside influence.

Supply details of effect on occupant//hered. mem.??/going for door now closed.// Discovering books in attic//shadowy companion? //wanders around tower//final denouement

[In secret room deep black shaft 5 ft. diam. leading down from hole in floor through house and foundations. Swish of the tides heard far below.]*

*Crossed out.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 13)

tome on the poor creatures who comprise what Isaac Asimov calls the Army of the Night.

--David F. Godwin
Dallas, TX

Crypt #51 might be called the "merciful correlation of contents issue," with Shawn Ramsey's and Carl Ford's respective anatomies of Lumley's and Kuttner's Mythos fiction and the info on the Tcho-Tchos. Mike Ashley's piece on Lovecraft and Blackwood was his usual informative stuff. We all idolize Lovecraft looking back from 1987, but it's interesting to see how his contemporaries perceived him. Hugh Cave seemed to think of him as just another colleague in his interview with Audrey Parente in the last Etchings and Odysseys. About the same time, though, John Campbell was using him as an example of the type of fantasy he did not want in Unknown, which in a very backhanded way was recognizing Lovecraft not just as an author, but as an innovator of a particular kind of fantasy.

Of all the fiction Lin Carter has had in Crypt, I liked "The Benevolence of Yib" the best. Ligotti's "The Mystics of Meulenburg" was his usual good stuff.

--Stefan R. Dziemianowicz
(continued on page 24)



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**AND YET EVEN STILL MORE
LIMERICKS FROM YUGGOTH**

By Lin Carter

XXXX.

Of Golgoroth, here's what I've
heard,
That he often acts somewhat ab-
surd.

The Shantaks that serve him
Will often observe him
Behaving a bit like a nerd.

XXXXI.

Why else would he pick the South
Pole
To bury himself in a hole
Beneath the Black Mountain?
(There ain't no accountin'
For personal taste, I've been tol'l!)

XXXXII.

When Zoth-Ommog came down from
the stars
He passed up Uranus and Mars,
Saturn, Neptune and Pluto—
Never caring a hoot, though,
Since Yuggoth had classier bars.

XXXXIII.

Yep, on Yuggoth a cocktail they
serve—
To drink one takes plenty of
nerve—
Gulp down three, the ground
quakes,
Even Yig sees pink snakes,
And, wow, all the stars you'll ob-
serve!

XXXXIV.

So Zoth-Ommog stopped off on his
trip
Down to Earth just to sample a sip:
His thirst was terrific,
It took the Pacific
To cool off his headache, the rip!

XXXXV.

Come to think of it, this could ex-
plain
Why Golgoroth put ice on his brain,
And found the Antarctic
Cool, soothing and dark (hic!)
Just the thing for his hangover
pain.

XXXXVI.

And Mnomquah lives inside the Moon
Rather far from the nearest saloon;
When he's worked up a thirst
He has to go first
Down to Ib on the shores of Lake
Thune,

XXXXVII.

Where his minions keep lots of the
sauce
Right on hand so whenever their
boss
Has a hankering hearty
To have him a party,
It won't catch the boys at a loss.

XXXXVIII.

Yes, the whole darn tentacular crew
Of the Old Ones are fond of the
brew,
They enjoy some high jinks
And a couple stiff drinks,
Then they nap for an aeon or two.

XXXXIX.

If the Old Ones stopped off at the
store
There on Yuggoth to have just one
more
Before they descended,
No wonder it ended
With the Elder Gods winning the
war!

L.

But I don't think it makes any diff
That the Elder Gods won it—what if
Old Cthulhu instead
Had come out way ahead,
Although drunk as an old bindle-
stiff—

LI.

Why, it sure would be awfully dumb
To have the nine worlds ruled by
some
Cosmic octopi boozy,
All maudlin and woozy,
And their boss a besotted old bum!

LII.

Yes, the Elder Gods still are some
use
(at least they stay off the old
juice),
And rule with propriety,
Loads of sobriety,
From their domain on the far Betel-
geuze.*

*Pronounced "beetle-juice," you
know.

L'Envoi*

LIII.

So . . . if a Byakhee gives you
the wink
And offers to buy you a drink,
Just thank him politely
But say "no" forthrightly,
And never mind what he may think.

LIV.

And if you would keep a clear head
Go early (and sober) to bed;
Yes, you'd really be wise
To do as I advise—
And order a Pepsi instead.

*I think I mean "L'Envoi."

ABSOLUTELY AND POSITIVELY
THE END
OF THE LIMERICKS FROM YUGGOTH

--Lin Carter

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 22)

Although I find Crypt erratic, that is part of its charm; and each issue contains at least a couple of fascinating items—if nothing else, the reviews and letters are usually interesting. I hope that your more liberal fiction policy does not lead to an increase in the percentage of Crypt that is devoted to fiction. Fan horror zines that publish fiction are everywhere these days, it seems, but precious few magazines include the mix of fiction and non-fiction, with the emphasis on HPL's works, that characterizes Crypt. In any case, I'm glad you changed your one-time plans to stop at #50. Hang in there at least until #100, okay?

--Michael A. Morrison
Norman, OK

Your notice of Donald Wandrei's death has left me numb. Since 1984 I had been exchanging letters with him. I found him courteous and that he had the soul of a poet. He once told me in a letter he hoped to write more stories when he had the time. Sadly time ran out for him. In my last contact with him he said he had "been overwhelmed with problems." By his handwriting I got the impression he had severe rheumatoid arthritis or Parkinsonism. His stories such as "The Tree Men of M'Bwa" or "Lives of Alfred Kramer" were among the greatest stories that Weird Tales published. Had his output been greater I have no doubts he would have been ranked along with Clark Ashton Smith and Robert E. Howard. He made up with E. Hoffmann Price and C. L. Moore a second three musketeers of Weird Tales. Let us hope that if he left any unpublished manuscripts that they don't disappear as has happened with other writers (Otis Adelbert Kline to mention one). His stories deserve to see the light of day. How many people have read The Eye and the Finger (Arkham House, 1944)? One
(continued on page 26)

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Did Lovecraft Have Syphilis ?

H. P. Lovecraft's father, Winfield Scott Lovecraft, died on July 19, 1898, of "general paresis," a state of paralysis now most often associated with syphilis, though at that time, as L. Sprague de Camp notes, "paresis" was simply another word for paralysis. Nonetheless, it is most often believed that Winfield Lovecraft's paresis was a result of syphilis. De Camp reports that physicians he consulted during the writing of his Lovecraft: A Biography judged that what little evidence exists would seem to suggest syphilis as the origin of the elder Lovecraft's condition.¹ Could his father have passed on the affliction to his son, HPL?

As far as I know, the first to broach this possibility was Winfield Townley Scott in his essay "His Own Most Fantastic Creation" (1944). He remarks very briefly, "There is no indication at all that his son inherited his father's disease."² David H. Keller in "Shadows Over Lovecraft" (1948) dismissed Scott's judgment as that of an uninformed layperson and argued instead that Lovecraft must have inherited the disease, and that the accompanying threat of eventual madness and death was the genesis of these recurring themes in Lovecraft's fiction. The prospect of miscegenation, inbreeding, and hereditary degeneration was a matter of true horror to Lovecraft, Keller claimed, because like the protagonist of "The Shadow over Innsmouth," Lovecraft found himself to be their victim!

Keller was an MD and explained that Winfield Lovecraft's condition must have been the result of syphilis. His wife, HPL's mother Susie, in turn must have contracted the disease, and she must have passed it on to young Howard. Susie and Howard must have had mild cases, or she would have been unable to

bear him, and he would not have survived. But the taint would remain, sufficiently strong to torment Lovecraft in the ways Keller suggested.

Keller's controversial essay, which originally appeared in Fantasy Commentator, was reprinted a decade later in Fresco, Spring 1958, where it was followed by a rebuttal by Kenneth Sterling, MD. Sterling charged that all of Keller's information was either outdated or just plain false, and thus his argumentation was inexcusably shoddy. First, Sterling argued that the elder Lovecraft might indeed have had syphilis, but that the evidence was certainly ambiguous, since he lived longer in the paretic condition than syphilitic cases usually do. But supposing Winfield Lovecraft did have syphilis, Sterling continued, it is simply not true that his wife or child must have derived it from him.⁴

One suspects that more was involved in this dispute than medicine. Keller was also a successful pulp writer, and some have suggested that his insinuation of Lovecraft having syphilis may have been a spiteful jab at Lovecraft's apostle August W. Derleth for some disparaging remark Derleth had made concerning Keller's fiction. Sterling, in turn, was not only himself a one-time pulp writer, but also a friend and fan of Lovecraft (the two co-authored "In the Walls of Eryx"), and thus was anxious to clear Lovecraft's name of what he considered a slur. But in any event, only medical evidence can settle the issue. Now at last the question has been settled.

The microfilmed medical records housed in Jane Brown Memorial Hospital that were made at the time of H. P. Lovecraft's final illness clearly show (on the top left-hand corner of the lab sheet) that Love-

craft was given a Wasserman test, which proved negative. He did not have syphilis.

How has this data escaped earlier researchers? Apparently they had access only to earlier, inferior quality photocopies of the records. Such copies, which I have also seen, turned out quite faded, and one cannot make out the relevant material, which is, however, quite distinct on more recent, superior copies.

NOTES

¹L. Sprague de Camp, Lovecraft: A Biography (London: New English Library, 1976), p. 16.

²Winfield Townley Scott, "His Own Most Fantastic Creation," in August W. Derleth (ed.), Marginalia (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1944), p. 327.

³David H. Keller, "Shadows Over Lovecraft," Fresco, Spring 1958, Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 23-26.

⁴Response by Kenneth Sterling appended to Keller, "Shadows," pp. 27-29.

KLARKASH-TON

Those readers interested in submitting articles to Klarkash-Ton, a new Cryptic Publications journal devoted to Clark Ashton Smith, should send manuscripts to editor Steve Behrends, 508 East Downer Place, Aurora, IL 60505.

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MAIL=CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 24)

more thread that tied us with the golden age of Weird Tales has now been cut. Perhaps Crypt of Cthulhu can have someone who knew him well write a memorial or even have an issue devoted to him. Crypt is about the only magazine qualified to do so. Let Donald Wandrei be remembered not as someone who knew Lovecraft, but as a great writer and poet in his own right.

Donald Wandrei: May he rest in peace but may his memory live on.

--Morgan T. Holmes

Cleveland Heights, OH

Yuletide issue is excellent—you'll tide me over until next year! It continues to amaze me that there are so many new aspects of HPL being discovered by the scholars who contribute to Crypt. Probably no other contemporary author has received such intense a study—or deserved it!

--Robert Bloch

Los Angeles, CA

I loved the new Crypt. My favorite item was Mike Ashley's "Lovecraft and Blackwood: A Surveillance." Reading it made me regret that I've yet to find a collection of Blackwood's tales. Ashley writes very well, and the article seems well-researched.

Shawn's piece on Kuttner's Mythos tales reveals yet another side of Ramsey's writing talents (he has composed many excellent poems, written some swell stories, and edited a great first issue of Revelations from Yuggoth).

I hope you will soon realize that Ligotti deserves a special issue dedicated to him, filled with rare tales and articles. He continues to stun and fascinate me with his titanic abilities as a writer. Thanks for including "The Mystics of Muehlenburg" in this issue.

The other articles were all interesting and entertaining, and as usual the letters section was great. In my letter, it should have been

(continued on page 37)

Who the Hell Was Winfield Scott Phillips?

By Will Murray

I enjoy research. Digging through stacks of old magazines, letters and manuscripts with the goal of distilling information, is one of the joys of my life. But sometimes research does not solve a question so much as it creates new ones.

This was the case sometime back when I hied off to that repository of arcana, the Boston Public Library, in search of a bit of H. P. Lovecraft's trivia. As is well known, Lovecraft's parents, Susan Phillips and Winfield Scott Lovecraft, were wed in Boston and resided in the Dorchester section for some time after their marriage. I thought it would be interesting to consult the Boston City Directories for 1889, establish their address and then check out the house where in all probability the immortal H. P. Lovecraft was actually conceived.

This was easily done, but the trouble was there was no Winfield Scott Lovecraft to be found in the 1889 Boston City Directory. Nor in 1890. Nor even in 1888. In fact there were no Lovecrafts listed at all. Annoyed, but not wishing to give up without a fight, I prowled the city directories at random, looking at names and addresses. While doing so, a thought struck me. Perhaps I should look under the name Phillips. Who knows but that Susan Phillips might have established the residence prior to the marriage. But, alas, I found no Susan Phillips.

I did, however, find a Winfield Scott Phillips.

How odd, I thought. Still, Phillips was a common name—at least in turn-of-the-century Boston. And Winfield Scott was a popular name combination given to men in the last century, inasmuch as it honored the famous American military hero, General Winfield Scott.

Struck by the amusing parallel,

and possibly being a trifle bored, I looked up Winfield Scott Phillips in several consecutive directories. Phillips was listed as a teamster, residing at 14 Condor Street in Boston in 1888. The next year, he had moved to 1 Meridan. There was no listing of him in 1890. But he was back in 1891, living at 824 East Fifth Street in South Boston, where he remained into 1892. Phillips was absent from the Boston City Directory again in 1893, but the next year he was back in South Boston, this time residing at 822 East Fifth Street (probably the other side of a typical South Boston duplex), where the Boston City Directory listed him as living until 1900—after which he drops out of the listings completely.

For some reason, I made notes of all this erratic information, tempted I guess by the vague parallels between Phillips' movements and the activities of H. P. Lovecraft's parents. When I later compared what I dug up about W. S. Phillips with what I knew of W. S. Lovecraft, I was astonished to find an amazing string of coincidences.

None of this may mean anything, but I found that Phillips' first move, from 14 Condor to 1 Meridan Street (both of which are in East Boston, by the way), occurs in the year that Susan Phillips and Winfield Scott Lovecraft were wed, and the year Lovecraft would presumably have changed his address. According to L. Sprague de Camp, in his biography, *Lovecraft*, "... following the marriage, the ... couple rented quarters in Dorchester, Massachusetts, south of Boston, since most of Winfield Lovecraft's business was at that time in Boston." The next year, in August, Susan Lovecraft returned to Providence alone to have her child, HPL. This is the year there is no listing for Winfield Scott Phillips in the

Boston City Directory, interestingly enough.

According to de Camp, "Since Winfield Lovecraft's principal business was in Boston, he set about buying a lot in that area and contracting for a house. In the spring of 1892, when Howard was a year and a half old, the family moved. Their movements for the next year are uncertain. According to Lovecraft, the family rented temporary quarters in Dorchester and took a vacation in Dudley, Massachusetts."

This does not correspond to Winfield Scott Phillips' movements. He is listed at 824 East Fifth Street for both 1891 and 1892—although if the census was taken early enough in the year, it might not have recorded a springtime move. (Let us, for the sake of speculation, pretend that Winfield Scott Phillips and Winfield Scott Lovecraft are somehow connected.)

After they boarded with the family of the poet Louise Imogen Gunley for the months of June and July in Auburndale, the living situation of the Lovecraft family is unknown. De Camp writes: "I do not know where the Lovecrafts lived during the fall and winter of 1892-93," and he goes on to relate the story of how Winfield Scott Lovecraft, during a trip to Chicago in April 1893, apparently suffered a nervous breakdown and had to be institutionalized in the East. "This state of affairs continued for five years until, on April 25, 1898, Winfield Lovecraft was admitted (or readmitted) to Butler Hospital in Providence, in a condition of advanced cerebral disease or 'general paralysis of the insane.' On July 19th aged forty-four, he died."

As it happens, 1893 is the second year that Winfield Scott Phillips disappears from the Boston listings, as presumably Winfield Scott Lovecraft would have had he continued to maintain a Boston address up to this time.

The next year, of course, Phillips is listed at 822 East Fifth Street, where he continued to be listed until 1899—the year following

Winfield Scott Lovecraft's death.

Let's speculate, shall we? Let's assume, because we all like to believe that really close coincidences actually mean something, that Winfield Scott Phillips and Winfield Scott Lovecraft were the same person. Let's say, either because Lovecraft was such an unusual name (Don't forget that HPL was the only known Lovecraft to be born in America even to this day) or because strong-willed Susan was reluctant to part with her honored maiden name, that the couple was known as the Phillips—not the Lovecraft-family.

If we allow such a fancy, then virtually every one of Winfield Scott Phillips' address changes and disappearances can be explained by a simultaneous event in the life of Winfield Scott Lovecraft. It's all nicely Fortean. Except for the period from 1894 to 1899 when Winfield Scott Phillips is listed as residing at 822 East Fifth Street in South Boston while Winfield Scott Lovecraft was supposedly in an institution.

But was Lovecraft in an institution? De Camp's vagueness about where Lovecraft had been taken after the breakdown, combined with his indication that Lovecraft wasn't hospitalized at Butler until April 1898, indicates that there may be no extant documentation of Lovecraft's living situation, other than hearsay from Lovecraft's letters or surviving members of the family.

It is therefore not impossible for Winfield Scott Lovecraft to have lived in Boston from 1894 to 1898 under the name Winfield Scott Phillips. It is known that his marriage was very shaky and that while Susan Lovecraft continued to reside in Providence, her husband lived an hour away in Boston. And even if Lovecraft was institutionalized, it is not impossible that a residence might have been maintained in the expectation of recovery. It could be that he merely boarded at 822 East Fifth Street and the boarding house owner dutifully gave his name at each year's census taking.

I cannot explain Phillips' continuing to be listed in 1899, a year after Lovecraft's death, except through some clerical error. When the census taker finds no one home, for instance, one accepted practice is to carry over the previous year's listing.

I admit this is all fanciful. I don't believe that the two Winfield Scotts were identical. If for no other reason than that Mrs. Lovecraft, being a proper middle-class woman of the Victorian era, would hardly retain her maiden name after marriage, much less insist or allow her husband to assume that name. Yet I can't account for the absence of a Winfield Scott Lovecraft in the Boston City Directories during the years he is believed to have resided in Boston.

And there is the fact that Winfield Scott Phillips listed his occupation as a teamster—although this might be explained away, too. W. S. Lovecraft's occupation was that of salesman for the Gorham Silver Company of Providence. As it happens, my father was a teamster. He delivered cookies, potato chips and pies to grocery stores and supermarkets by truck. But because he worked on commission, he called himself a salesman. That practice might have been current in Lovecraft's day.

There is one more piece to this puzzle. It is a startling one, and I discovered it in a startling way.

During my first trip to the Boston Public Library, I was unable to check all the city directories I had wanted. Specifically, I wanted to work my way back from 1889, which was the earliest year I had been able to examine the listings. A week later I returned to the library and called for the 1888 city directory and looked up Winfield Scott Phillips. I found him.

Then I did a double take. By some mental quirk, I had called, not for the Boston City Directory, but the Providence one! And it listed a Winfield Scott Phillips residing at 151 Fountain in Providence.

As his occupation, he gave "Teamster, Richmond Print Works."

Stunned, I checked the 1888 Boston City Directory, which is where I found Phillips living at 14 Condor Street. There was no listing for Phillips in Boston prior to 1888. But in Providence, I found him as far back as 1875, living at a succession of addresses with the exceptions of the years 1880, and 1882-1883, always giving teamster as his occupation.

It would seem that Winfield Scott Phillips' Boston movements not only paralleled those of Winfield Scott Lovecraft, but that they both moved from Providence to Boston in the same year, 1888. Needless to say, I found no Winfield Scott Lovecraft listed in the Providence City Directories, either.

I don't know how to explain any of this. I'm not sure it requires explanation. There is no reason that Winfield Scott Lovecraft should be linked in any concrete way with Winfield Scott Phillips, but those are the fruits of my idle research.

Who the hell is Winfield Scott Phillips? I don't know. I'm too busy trying to identify Winfield Scott Lovecraft's Boston addresses to worry about it any longer. Stuff like this can drive you crazy.

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AN INTERTEXTUAL GLOSS

By Donald R. Burleson, PhD

In "The Quest of Iranon," Lovecraft's purple-robed minstrel Iranon wanders the earth in search of his remembered city of Aira; in "Celephais," Lovecraft's dreamer Kuranès wanders in dream in search of his own briefly-glimpsed marvellous city of Celephais (Arkham House: *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, 83-89, 111-17). In many respects one feels that the two wanderers Iranon and Kuranès are thematically the same peripatetic soul, with different names, and it may prove interesting to meld the differently-named aspects of this one mythic quester to see how, as one coalesced figure, he comments intertextually upon himself.

The wanderer, as Iranon among the stern-faced inhabitants of the granite city of Teloth, has "no heart for the cobbler's trade," preferring to sing of the beautiful memories of his childhood, but he is told that "song is folly." As Kuranès, caring not "for the ways of people about him," he prefers "to dream and write of his dreams," but those about him laugh at his writings. In both aspects, the source of his scorned art is memory—for Iranon, memory regarded as recollection of a real childhood home; for Kuranès, memory regarded as recollection of a childhood dream. Thus on this point the quester differs from himself. A valuational distinction between the "realities" of dream and of waking may ultimately be superfluous—Lovecraft's narrator in "The Silver Key" reminds us, after all, that "all life is only a set of pictures in the brain, among which there is no difference betwixt those born of real things and those born of inward dreamings, and no cause to value the one above the other" (Arkham House: *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*, 408)—but in any

case the quester differs with himself over basic attitudinal and perceptive distinctions. As Iranon, he searches for his lost city only when he supposes that it corresponds to a remembered outward reality of his childhood as opposed to a memory of his childhood dreams; as Kuranès, he chooses to search for his once-glimpsed city because it corresponds to a childhood dream that he prefers to the outward realities of prosaic adulthood. The journeying quester pursues his goal tragically divided against himself, one side of his personality embracing an understanding wholly suppressed by the other side. Yet this difference is on another level dismantled by the fact that the two facets are in agreement, in that they both in their respective ways reject the "Silver Key" axiom. As Iranon, the quester would not suppress the oneiric nature of his cherished city if he believed that dream and outward reality hold equal importance; likewise, as Kuranès, if he believed so, he would not prefer dream to outward reality. Each facet takes a stand, each complementing the other like the two sides of a coin—a stand against the axiom. But there is paradox in the fact that it is by splicing the texts together that one sees this homogeneity, when the merging has the effect of grafting one text ("Iranon") in which the assumption seems to be that on a practical level the "Silver Key" axiom is false (Iranon is destroyed by the discovery that his "reality" is the memory of but a dream) with another text ("Celephais") in which a narrative indifference to the dream-versus-reality distinction persists to the end, where both dream and reality are treated in balance. Clearly, an interwoven web of paradox and textual self-subversion exists here, a web in

which the critical process is itself enmeshed.

The quester, as Iranon, meets a young boy named Romnod, who, unlike his stern-visaged peers, seems a kindred spirit; together they search at length for the marvellous city, Romnod growing older while Iranon seems not to age. They find lodgment in the garishly festive city of Oonai, a poor parody of the city of Iranon's yearning, and Romnod grows coarse with wine and revelry and finally dies. Romnod has served textually as a kind of comparative figure; not sharing the central quester's memories of the marvellous city, he ages while the quester remains young, and not having the quester's standards, he is content with the experience of Oonai and its dissipations; he perishes, while the quester lives to quest again—but Iranon reclaims his purple rags and returns to the road only when Romnod has died; Iranon seems to have needed this experience to turn his mind back upon the quest with the conviction that Oonai has been no adequate substitute for the city of his memories. But as Kuranès, the quester has depended upon no Romnod, no comparative object-lesson, to maintain his vision; wandering through dreamscapes, he has found lesser places than his dream-city, but has not lingered, has not really tried to content himself with them, his vision and goal remaining fixed. As Kuranès, the quester has an underlying potential for weakness (the ironic-Iranonic?—side of his personality) that he must not allow to surface and to deflect him from his steadfastness; as Iranon, the quester has an underlying strength (the Kuranès—curative?—side of his personality) that sustains him through periods of confusion.

Yet the respective sides of this complementation contain elements antithetical to themselves. Kuranès, though seemingly self-sustaining and unswerving of purpose, is tempted in the dreamland of the red-roofed pagodas to forget his Celephais, and he must eventually

resort to drugs to maintain his quest; even as the strong side of Iranon's personality he contains seeds of weakness. Reciprocally, Iranon, though seemingly less self-sustaining, does carry on his quest without the departed Romnod, persevering though people laugh at his songs and his tattered robes; even as the weak side of Kuranès' personality he harbours reserves of strength. Thus as a unitary figure, the quester is not merely so heterogeneous as to possess a personality in which strength and weakness are mingled; in the quester's multiply complex being, there is strength in the weakness and weakness in the strength, a sort of thematic chiasmus, so that the difference between the poles of the personality dismantles itself into ways in which strength differs from itself and weakness differs from itself. Like all great fictional heroes, the wanderer is richly enigmatic.

Traditionally, the mythic hero dies in the quest and is reborn. In these present texts, to the extent that one credits their conventional boundaries, one does not find the typical mythopoeic pattern. Iranon, upon hearing the old shepherd disclose the dream-nature of the elusive city of Aira, simply walks into the quicksand (as an old man now) and dies; Kuranès, though he both dies physically and lives on in some sphere of dream, does not die and become reborn in temporal succession. It is only when one merges the texts, refusing to accept the tyranny of their artificial boundaries, that one finds the whole timeless pattern of death and rebirth. The wanderer, as Iranon the vulnerable, perishes, and we are told that "that night something of youth and beauty died in the elder world." The quicksand that swallows him is the dead-handed judgment of the world that dream is mere dream; it is the same stultifying judgment that has driven the quester, as the dreamer Kuranès, inward upon himself to begin with, to find a higher reality. But

as Kuranes he prevails; the "Silver Key" axiom affirms itself after all in the arrival of "the cortege of knights come from Celephais to bear him thither forever." What is confused in the seeker—the beautiful and noble but irresolute Iranon, for whom dream is not enough—has died, and what is left is strength and clarity of conviction: Kuranes reigns forever "over Ooth-Nargai and all the neighbouring regions of dream." The archetypal inscription of heroic death and rebirth emerges here with the recognition that as in all worthy literature, textual boundaries—boundaries between texts and critical processes—are themselves a prosaic integument of mundane illusion obscuring the wonders of dream.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 17)

seems to say it all, doesn't it?

--Jim Cort

Newton, NJ

I am sorry to write that Crypt #52 was my least favorite issue, ever. The HPL-as-character stories did nothing for me. They did not say anything interesting about the man, using him as one more Mythos prop. Using Lovecraft himself in this way is to take the Mythos to its logical extreme, retaining the superficialities and gimmicks that HPL used, usually at the expense of the tone, atmosphere, substance and purpose which characterized his literary ideal and the best of his fiction. I don't mean to be harsh—I do not mind if your readership wants an occasional batch of stories like this. I am glad that you don't print such material too often. Furthermore, I believe that both the readers and writers in question are capable of better. I think the reception that the Ligotti stories have received is evidence of this. He proves that it is possible to draw inspiration from what is unique and of most value in Lovecraft's work. I will admit that this is a matter of opinion and

taste, and others surely differ. I don't have the word "critic" on my business card, so I don't think my esthetic judgments constitute "Truth," as I believe some of your esteemed contributors do. Fritz Leiber wrote somewhere that he finds dealing with facts difficult enough, and that truth is beyond him. This seems like a wise view, to this humble observer.

I liked #51 quite a bit, particularly the Blackwood article and the "Mystics of Muelenburg."

I cannot resist a good-natured dig at Mr. Carter's comments in his letter in #52. He is so busy, it seems, digging through musty arcana of the sort we see in his charming Yoh-Vombis column that he has somehow missed the emergence in recent years of Maestro Ligotti—even, apparently, overlooking your review of the now out-of-print Songs of a Dead Dreamer. Come on, Linkah-Tah, get with it! Also, the comment that Lovecraft couldn't write with "eerie suggestiveness" any more than he could, should not be put to a Crypt readers' poll. However, let me add that I feel that some of the slams directed at Mr. Carter's tales have been excessive. If a reader says that he doesn't like something, and why, that is one thing. When he makes personal insults, I feel that he should write something better and be prepared to face the music, or shut up. Once again, a cranky opinion from my endless store.

I thought Will Murray's article showing HPL didn't revise "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza" was an amusing shaggy dog. I have suspicions that he didn't revise a vast number of works from that era—perhaps Mr. Murray has stumbled on a whole new genre in HPL studies.

--Michael J. Lotus
Chicago, IL

FROM THE VAULTS OF YOH-VOMBIS

By Lin Carter

Unnatural History

The bestiaries were among the great best sellers of the Middle Ages. They were serious compendia of information, hearsay, opinion and rumor about all sorts of beasts, some drawn from actual observation and some from Pliny, Aristotle, and the first pioneers of zoology. Considering their enormous popularity and vast, almost Scriptural, authority, it surprises me that only one has ever been translated into English, and that (a Latin prose bestiary of the twelfth century) by T. H. White.

One of the most interesting things brought to light in the bestiary literature is the notion of a pecking order among beasts, that is, that even the most ferocious of monsters lives in bowel-quaking dread of another creature. Let me share some of this data with you:

1. Lions fear roosters, especially white roosters.

2. Weasels are immune to the petrification inflicted on all other creatures by the gaze of the Basilisk. In fact, weasels kill them on sight.

3. Although the scaly-armored, horrendous Corkodrill which wallows amidst the mudflats of the Nile is a fearful brute, its natural enemy is the Hydrus, a huge Nilotic serpent, known to swallow the horny Corkodrill at a gulp.

4. Dragons hate doves, for some reason, but are afraid of the trees they are fond of nesting in, such as the sweet-fruited *Perindeus* trees of India.

5. While Dragons dislike doves and avoid, wherever possible, even the trees they roost in, they go in great fear of Mantichores, especially the bright-yellow Mantichore (most of them are scarlet, you know). My

source adds, with ghoulish relish, that Mantichores hunt them down and gorge on their blood.

Miscellaneous information from the bestiaries:

6. The red carbuncle-stone which is condensed from the urine of lynxes is called *Ligurius*.

7. *Leucrota* is the very swiftest of beasts. It has no teeth, but one continuous (serrated?) bony ridge in its mouth. Its mouth opens all the way back to its ears and it makes a sound like many people talking at once. Rather like a singles bar, I guess.

8. *Makara* is an elephant-headed fish with four legs, a curling trunk and a suit of large scales overlapping, which begins at the base of its neck. Unelephantinelike, it has no tusks but sharp triangular teeth like sharks have. It is found principally in India . . . as if they didn't have enough things to worry about in India, as things are.

9. The *Physeter*, or Whirlpoole (physeter means "blower" in Greek) creates maelstroms by spouting water, then sucking ships down. It feeds only on drowned sailors.

10. The exudations of the *Upas Tree* are deadly to all life within a radius of fifteen miles.

* * *

From the Wisdom of Oz

You wouldn't expect wise or pithy sayings to be found in books written for the ten-years-old-and-up trade, now would you? Well, they abound in the Oz books, and some of them, like the first I quote below, are succinct enough to have appeared in Poor Richard with Ben Franklin's name attached to them.

"Many a satin ribbon has a cotton back." --Patchwork Girl

"Dangers don't hurt us; only things that happen ever hurt anyone, and a danger is a thing that might happen, and might not happen, and sometimes don't amount to shucks." --Lost Princess

"Dangers, when they cannot be avoided, are often quite interesting." --Tin Woodman

"No thief, however skillful, can rob one of knowledge, and that is why knowledge is the best and safest treasure to acquire." --Lost Princess

"The more one knows, the luckier he is, for knowledge is the greatest gift in life." --Patchwork Girl

"The way to solve a problem is to begin at the beginning and go on to the conclusion." --Giant Horse

"Only those things one acquires honestly are able to render one content." --Lost Princess

"One who is master of himself is always a king, if only to himself." --Tik-Tok

"Contentment with one's lot is true wisdom." --Lost Princess

"A good heart is a thing that brains cannot create and that money cannot buy." --Marvelous Land

"Always, when there's trouble, there's a way out of it, if you can find it." --Lost Princess

"If we didn't want anything, we would never get anything, good or bad. I think our longings are natural, and if we act as nature prompts us we can't go far wrong." --Tik-Tok

"If one has money without brains, he cannot use it to full advantage; but if one has brains without money, they will enable him to live comfortably to the end of his days." --Marvelous Land

"It is more fun to accomplish a good act than an evil one, as you will discover when once you have tried it." --Scarecrow

* * *

Notes & Quotes

Some primal termite knocked on wood
And tasted it, and found it good,
And that is why your Cousin Jay
Fell through the parlor floor today.
--Ogden Nash

"We have invented the wireless telegraph, the motor car and the electric light, commodities unknown to previous centuries: and for that reason we assume that the twentieth century is the best of all, instead of being merely the most recent."
--T. H. White

"Anyone who consults a shrink should have his head examined."
--Robert A. Heinlein

"Everything can be explained except facts." --Talbot Mundy

"His malaise was that particular plateau of middle-age, swept by uncertain winds and lit by dubious dawns and dusks, when one realizes that hopes deferred are no longer realizable, that ports yet unvisited will never now be known."
--P. D. James

"To err is human; to forgive, divine; but to find someone else to blame it on is sheer genius."
--Anon

A jolly young fisher named Fischer
Went fishing for fish in a fissure,
A fish, with a grin,
Pulled the fisherman in—
Now they're fishing the fissure for Fischer. --Anon

"The secret of eternal youth is to lie like the dickens about your age." --H. C.

"And this is the strangest mystery of all, that Death must hurry to our bidding, although he is a god." --Amanda Cross

"The fantasy of growing old, like the fantasy of growing up, was part of the ineffable sweetness, touched with horror, of existence—itsself the lordliest fantasy of all."
--Charles Williams

"The simplest things last long—

est; the microbe outlived the mastodon." --T. H. White

"Time is a random wind that blows down the long, long corridor of life, eventually slamming shut every door." --H. C.

A man hired by John Smith & Co. Loudly declared he would tho

Man that he saw

Dumping dirt near his store. The drivers, therefore, didn't do.

--Mark Twain

"Things might be better, or they might be worse, but they would never be the same again; and the innate conservatism of youth asks neither poverty nor riches, but only immunity from change."

--"The Golden Age," Kenneth Grahame

"The very existence of a riddle is proof that there is a solution to it." --Talbot Mundy

Folk-Similes

I have no idea why, but I've been collecting such as the following for years now. There's no great trick to it: any reader can come up with a dozen or two more in a couple of afternoons of meditation. But let me share these with you, a selection from my Master List.

cool as a cucumber
cheap as dirt
bold as brass
sharp as a tack
flat as a pancake
dead as a door nail
stiff as a board
easy as pie
bald as an egg
mad as a wet hen
fresh as a daisy
crazy as a loon
sick as a dog
pretty as a picture
weak as a kitten
dry as dust
homely as a hedge fence
sound as the dollar
nervous as a cat
good as gold
poor as a church mouse

big as all outdoors
deaf as a post
white as a sheet
light as a feather
cute as a button
soft as butter
clear as crystal
neat as a pin
clean as a whistle
thin as a rail
clear as a bell
silent as the grave
busy as a bee
drunk as a lord
high as a kite
silly as a goose
cold as ice
black as pitch
hard as nails
mad as a hatter
blind as a bat
proud as a peacock
dull as dishwater

Some of these are self-explanatory ("dry as dust"; "high as a kite"), others inexplicable. Why "homely as a hedge fence," for instance? When I last visited England, I thought the hedge fences between plowed fields were quite attractive. They reminded me of illustrations by Edmund Dulac, or whomever it was who did the pictures in the Heritage edition of The Wind in the Willows.

. . . And, considering the number of times it has been devalued since Lyndon Johnson, I wonder if people still say "sound as the dollar"?

The Leviathan

Leviathan is very large,
Much bigger than an oil-barge,
And swims with so much motion
That there is only room for one
Under the Moon, beneath the Sun,
In any given Ocean.

I used to wonder what they ate
Until I saw one at his plate
A-crunchin' and a-munchin'
On full-grown Whales (to him, sar-
dines)
And found out what Enormous
means.

I left him at his luncheon.

The Myrmecoleon

The Myrmecoleon, you'll find,
Is lion front and ant behind;
Or, if you're nautical and daft,
Leonid fore and antic aft.

Which makes me wonder what it
eats,
And how it handles all its feet,
And why such folks as me and you
Don't ever see one in a Zoo.

--from The Intelligent Child's
Own Book of Interesting and
Instructive Monsters,

by your Humble Columnist

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 26)

"his letters from HPL . . ." that
Munn burned.

--Wilum Pugmire, Seattle, WA

Stefan Dziemianowicz's review of "The Magazine Mythos" in Crypt #52 raises a curious question. You may have noticed that the Cthulhu Mythos has virtually died out in professional fantasy fiction. With rare exceptions, like T. E. D. Klein's The Ceremonies, there have been strikingly few Mythos stories published on a professional level in the past decade. But there are enough published in amateur magazines to make a yearly survey possible.

So I wonder: How many, if any, of these amateur-published Mythos tales are actually of professional quality? I note that they tend to appear toward the lower end of the semi-pro spectrum, in magazines that pay so little (or nothing) that they cannot maintain professional standards the way Whispers, Weirdbook, or Fantasy Tales do. But somewhere in all that mass of stuff there must be one or two stories well-written enough and original enough to be of interest to a general readership, not just to a small segment of fandom.

Are the writers submitting their stories professionally? It's commonly perceived, I suspect, that editors

of the professional magazines do not want Mythos fiction, but a really good story, which is a good story first and Mythos second, should sell on its own merits.

Aside from one Brian Lumley piece to be published in the Summer 1988 Weird Tales which is very marginally Mythos-related, no professional-quality Mythos story has turned up at WT. We don't want routine scholar-is-eaten stories. We would buy a Mythos story which was genuinely frightening. The element of fear seems to be almost entirely absent from most post-Lovecraft Mythos stories, particularly those of the Derleth Mythos (by Derleth and others). If the story exists merely to make the reader smile and fondly remember other Mythos stories, well, forget it. But if it's a genuinely self-standing, valid story, then Weird Tales will pay roughly 6¢ a word for it.

--Darrell Schweitzer
Strafford, PA

Lin Carter's poem about the Jabberwock was excellent. It read like Lewis Carroll had written it. His work on the Griffin was clever as well.

--Charles Garofalo
Wayne, NJ

I suppose you are aware that next up from the folks who did Re-Animator and From Beyond is something based on "The Evil Clergyman." This, if I remember correctly, will be the middle part of a 3-part horror anthology film. After that the same producer and director will do an adaptation of "The Lurking Fear," and also announced is Bride of the Reanimator! Well, I don't know about that . . .!

--Randy Palmer
Arlington, VA

Just wanted to say that I enjoyed Crypt #52 very much. Also I wanted to salute Stefan Dziemianowicz for his excellent reviews. I feel that he hasn't been given
(continued on page 43)

R'lyeh Review

Weird Tales, Spring 1988, 148 pp., \$3.50.

(Reviewed by Lin Carter)

I greet the reappearance of Weird Tales with eagerness and optimism, and approach the task of reviewing the first issue with presentiments of Doom.

That is, I hope I enthusiastically approve of what Scithers and his henchmen have done to the venerable old magazine, because if I have to say half-hearted (or even downright critical) things about it, more than a few of my readers, well aware that I was the previous editor of the magazine, until it was taken away from me, might very well mark down my lack of enthusiasm to Sour Grapes.

Well . . . here goes.

First, I applaud the fact that Scithers has restored WT to something close to its original proportions as a pulp magazine. Also, the cover (by George Barr) is terrific; from what Schweitzer tells me, it's supposed to be a sort of super-Brundage cover. Well, it doesn't look anything like a Brundage, but it's a super cover, just the same. And the interior illos are uniformly good, with sly little tricks thrown in (all the interiors are by George Barr, who's even better in black and white than he is in color).

By sly tricks, I mean the double-pager on pp. 54-5 closely resembles the style of Virgil Finlay, while the one on p. 88 derives obviously from Hannes Bok . . . while the one on p. 120 is Boris Dolgov, by Crom! Didn't think anyone in the world remembered Boris Dolgov but me . . .

Unfortunately, Barr has seen fit (or been instructed) to redraw the contents page logo, originally designed by Bok. Well, he has also redesigned it, for no good reason that I can see, and it irks me that he did. This is a minor point, but I can already see that this

review, alas, is going to add up to a lot of minor points.

Moving right along, the first innovation Scithers has committed is to make this the "special Gene Wolfe issue," and to lead off the issue with no fewer than six Gene Wolfe stories, of which no fewer than five are trivial bordering on awful. Most of these have been printed before (fannishly, I guess), but so obscurely that you are not likely to have seen the stories. The trouble is, they weren't worth reprinting in the first place.

The one new story Gene Wolfe has written for the issue ("The Other Dead Man") is a science fiction story that smooches over into being a horror yarn, and succeeds brilliantly at being both. If I had been the editor who put this issue together, I would have headlined "The Other Dead Man" and dumped the other "stories" in the garbage.

I'm not at all sure I approve of this newfangled idea of devoting so much of any one issue to any one author, even Gene Wolfe, but what the hay . . . a minor point.

Most of the other stories in this issue (by luminaries like T. E. D. Klein, Ramsey Campbell, and Tanith Lee) are excellent shading over into mediocre, to not so hot (Darrell Schweitzer, with a rather meandering narrative that would be a lot better with a sense of style which it really needed). Even the stories by the best writers are, um, not their best by a long shot. Ramsey Campbell's story is very second-rate Ramsey Campbell, although, of course, not all that bad, since even second-rate Ramsey Campbell is better than the cream produced by some writers I could name (but won't); but Ted Klein's story is light-years away from the plateau he reached with "Black Man With a Horn" or "The Events at Porothe Farm," and, to my taste, is utterly vitiated by a sappy last paragraph, which presents a happy ending. (Imagine a T. E. D. Klein horror

story with a happy ending!)

Tanith Lee's story, "Death Dances," forms a neat and amusing contrast with Darrell Schweitzer's effort. That is, the story has enough "sense of style" in it to redeem any two other graceless narratives of the calibre of Darrell's. Ghod, that lady can write. And pure style is such a difficult thing to pin down or even describe . . . but, boy, does she have it!

The only author represented here who had anything at all to do with the old Weird Tales of the '30s and '40s is Lloyd Arthur Eshback, who sold a couple of yarns to Farnsworth Wright. His story is called "Sister Abigail's Collection" and I think it's just nifty: but that's only natural, since I originally accepted the yarn for future publication, back when I was editing the magazine, before Bob Weinberg yanked the editorial chair out from under me.

Oh, and one set of verses by a WT regular, Joseph Payne Brennan, pretty minor stuff, memorable because it shows that Joe Brennan likes to spell "brusque" brusk. All of the other authors and versifiers represented in this issue are new to Weird Tales.

In this respect, I think George Scithers is making a large mistake. (Here comes the Sour Grapes, gang . . .) When I was editing the magazine, I strove mightily to establish a bridge, a continuity between present-day writers like Ramsey Campbell and Tanith Lee and Gary Myers and Brian Lumley, and some of the writers who helped build the Weird Tales legend. That is, I coaxed new stuff out of Manly Wade Wellman and Ray Bradbury, Frank Belknap Long and Carl Jacobi, and even found some previously unpublished stuff by Howard and Smith and Lovecraft, plus unreprinted stories by Derleth and Seabury Quinn, so that each of the only four issues which appeared under my editorship were more or less half-and-half. A good mix, I thought then, and, looking at the newly-revived magazine, which leans

almost completely in the direction of new authors, I still think so.

But the really important thing is that Weird Tales is back with us again, and in the hands of a shrewd and highly-experienced editor, who has, I think, stumbled on the one and only way the magazine could prove viable on today's magazine market—to take it entirely off the market, and make it only available by prepaid advance subscription through the mails. This eliminates the distributor almost miraculously (and if you ever had trouble finding one or another of the issues of WT I edited for Zebra Books, you know what a miracle it would be to avoid distributors).

Another mistake I think Scithers is making is not apparent from this first issue, but came out in an exchange of letters between the new Weird Tales staff and me.

You aren't going to like this any more than I did. So, if you have loins, prepare to gird them now:

They will not be publishing any Cthulhu Mythos stories.

At all. Not just by me, although that's how I found this out, when they rejected three or four new Mythos stories which I offered them (don't worry, they bought a few of my poems, which will, I trust, be appearing in time).

The reason for this seems to be that not only Scithers, but also Schweitzer, dislike Lovecraftian stuff—Lovecraft's prose style in particular—and seem to regard Mythos stories as unpublishable these days. (Put down that typewriter, Darrell: Gene Wolfe's six-hundred word "story" or whatever it is, "John K. (Kinder) Price" is not a Cthulhu Mythos story, no matter what you said in your last letter to me.)

I think this is a big mistake, if only because, since the Mythos was born in Weird Tales, it seems very likely to me that people today who pick up Weird Tales are going to expect to find a Mythos story therein. (I know I did!)

Well . . . what else? Cover stock is heavy, quality, slick, like

paperback covers; paper inside has trimmed edges and is fine, sturdy bond; magazine is handsome, truly. And has vast promise and potential, considering the number of excellent writers around today (I wonder if George has thought of writing to Angela Carter? She writes terrific short weirds, if her little book The Bloody Chamber is not just a fluke).

Yep, all of this is very well . . . but (*sigh*) I just wish I liked the first issue a lot more than I do.

Richard Dalby and Rosemary Pardoe (eds.), Ghosts & Scholars, Wellingborough, UK: Crucible/Aquarian Press (Thorsons Publishing Group, Denington Estate, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 2RQ), hardcover, 272 pp., £12.95. ISBN 1-85274-022-1.

(Reviewed by Mike Ashley)

In his essay on "Supernatural Horror in Literature," Lovecraft made a particularly astute observation with regard to the work of M. R. James. "A literary weird fictionist of the very first rank . . . [James] . . . has developed a distinctive style and method likely to serve as models for an enduring line of disciples." How right he was: indeed, the disciples had already been hard at it before Lovecraft first penned those lines, though how much of it he was aware of, I know not. Unlike Lovecraft, M. R. James has attracted perhaps more than his fair share of imitators. He even has his own Crypt-like magazine in the form of Rosemary Pardoe's Ghosts & Scholars, which has been appearing annually now for nine years. Rosemary has now teamed with Richard Dalby, a noted authority on weird fiction, and assembled a volume of Jamesian stories which is a must for any fan of MRJ. Published by Crucible in a particularly handsome edition, this book contains 25 stories plus 2 essays by MRJ, an introduction by Michael Cox, 14 illustrations by the likes of Stephen Jones, John Stewart, Brian Frost

and others, and a portfolio of photographs of James and his friends and some especially rare book covers. The whole package, therefore, is not just a reading feast, but a book collector's treasure.

All of the stories have their merits even though there are some, like John Dickson Carr's "Blind Man's Hood," which isn't very Jamesian, or others, like Sir Andrew Caldecott's "Christmas Reunion," which, frankly, just isn't very good. But the majority are rare and thus, like some of the items produced in Crypt, are being made available for collectors and devotees, who would have trouble finding some of these items. Two particularly rare items are "Brother John's Bequest" a delightful, slightly tongue-in-cheek piece by Arthur Gray from his notoriously scarce Tedious Brief Tales of Granta and Gramarye (1919), and "The Eastern Window" from the equally rare Stoneground Ghost Tales (1912), by E. G. Swain, one of MRJ's first imitators. Even rarer, though far less in demand, is "The Stone Coffin" by the pseudonymous 'B,' unavailable in bookform and lost in the pages of the Magdalene College Magazine during 1913 and reprinted here for the first time. A few other stories are rescued here from pages of old magazines: Arnold Smith's "The Face in the Fresco," for instance, comes from the London Mercury, whilst two of the stories, "The House Party" by Emma S. Duffin and "Here he Lies Where he Longed To Be" by Winifred Galbraith, were winners in a competition run by The Spectator newspaper and are reprinted here along with the words of the competition judge, M. R. James.

All of these stories have a delightful, log-crackling feel about them, although few have that true Jamesian chill of horror. The best is Eleanor Scott's "Celui-la," with a truly evocative ghost scene on a bleak French seashore. There are also some nice Jamesian touches in R. H. Benson's "Father Macclesfield's Tale," where the ghost's

progress is outlined in an eddy of leaves, and Cecil Binney's "The Saint and the Vicar," where foot-steps provide the shivers. Other worthy tales include "This Time" by Ramsey Campbell, "Dr. Horder's Room" by Patrick Carleton, "Come, Follow!," written by Sheila Hodgson based on one of James' own ideas and including a chilling nocturnal encounter, "The Horn of Vapula" by Lewis Spence and "An Incident in the City" by A. F. Kidd. They are my own personal favourites, but there are plenty of others here, enough to please even the most peripheral Jamesian fan. HPL would have found the volume a pleasure to relax to.

Peter Haining, The Art of Horror Stories. Chartwell Books (A Division of Book Sales Inc., 110 Enterprise Avenue, Secaucus, NJ 07094), 176 pp. \$8.95.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

For many years Peter Haining has expressed his appreciation of popular illustrations by including period-art folios in anthologies like The Fantastic Pulps and his facsimile edition of Weird Tales. In this book, first published in England in 1976 as Terror!, he drops the fiction and expands his scope to offer a sampling of horror illustrations from the last two centuries.

The Art of Horror Stories begins with the "shilling shockers," hack rewrites of the gothic novels. They used illustrations to grab the reader's attention (often more graphically than the most lurid pulp magazines of our own century). Haining continues through the penny-dreadful and pulp eras, by which time illustrations had become integral parts of the text. The book is set up chronologically, with a brief introductory paragraph to each section and the rest told through the captions. No attempt is made to give a formal history, but one still gets a good feel for each era's interests and taboos from the artwork. The quality of black-and-white reproductions is exceptional.

Weird Tales is the only magazine to get a special section, and it's jammed full of Bok, Finlay, Coye, Dolgov, Fox. But enough illustrations from Famous Fantastic Mysteries are reprinted to remind us of how much good artwork that magazine carried (Bok's definitive "Pickman's Model" and Finlay's spread for "Worms of the Earth" are just two examples here), and how much of it was done by the relatively unremembered Stephen Lawrence. One could have wished for portfolios arranged by artist, rather than by the authors they illustrated, and for an index at the back of the book, but these are small complaints for the price.

Clark Ashton Smith, Mother of Toads (Necronomicon Press, December 1987, \$2.50).

Clark Ashton Smith, The Dweller in the Gulf (Necronomicon Press, December 1987, \$2.50).

(Reviewed by Robert M. Price)

Necronomicon Press once again secures its position as the foremost small press publisher of scholarly resources for the study and enjoyment of the Weird Tales authors. These two booklets are the first in a new series called "The Unexpurgated Clark Ashton Smith." Several of Smith's tales were mercilessly bowdlerized and ham-handedly edited (sometimes by himself at editors' insistence!), and the original versions which alone embody CAS' creative vision have remained unavailable, extant only in manuscript. Now Smithologist par excellence Steve Behrends is unearthing the original versions, and publisher Marc Michaud is making them available to the Smith-starved public. "Mother of Toads" had been trimmed of its eroticism, while "Dweller in the Gulf" had suffered the addition of a whole new character and subplot in order to supply the trite pseudo-explanation for the fantastic that CAS so hated in pulp science fiction.

These two booklets are certainly by far the most visually striking

ever published by Necronomicon Press. Smith aficionado Robert H. Knox has unleashed his insane imagination in three-color covers which are truly jolting!

For years, Smith fans have had to take a back seat to the larger followings of Lovecraft and Howard. Smith's disciples had to content themselves with occasional special Smith issues of magazines like Nyc-talops, Anubis, or Crypt of Cthulhu. But now a Smith boom of sorts seems to be getting off the ground, largely thanks to Necronomicon Press. The recent collection of Smith's letters to Lovecraft may be seen as the beginning, and the present series of textually corrected stories has supplied the momentum. In the near future, so rumor has it, Arkham House is to issue a "Best of Smith" collection. Finally, Cryptic Publications will this year unveil a new and ongoing (though irregular) magazine, Klark-ash-Ton devoted to Smith and edited by Steve Behrends. It will reprint scarce and out-of-print critical articles together with new Smith studies and unpublished material by Smith.

Jason C. Eckhardt, Off the Ancient Track, A Lovecraftian Guide to New-England & Adjacent New-York (Necronomicon Press, 101 Lockwood Street, West Warwick, RI 02893). \$3.50.

(Reviewed by Robert M. Price)

This guidebook to Lovecraftian sites is at once more comprehensive and briefer than Beckwith's Lovecraft's Providence recently revamped and reissued by Donald M. Grant. Eckhardt's booklet, as the title suggests, covers all the places of importance both in Lovecraft's fiction and his life (quite appropriately, since they often overlapped). The main body of Off the Ancient Track is a series of uniquely Eckhardtian line-drawings of the various houses, churches, and other buildings, each accompanied by explanatory paragraphs quoted from Lovecraft's fiction and letters, and

in one case from Sonia Davis' memoirs. There are also six large-scale area road maps of College Hill, Providence, Boston, Marblehead, Brooklyn, and New England, the last also showing probable locations of Arkham, Kingsport, etc., taking into account the recent research of Will Murray (e.g., both Salem and Oakham are shown as analogues to Arkham). Eckhardt has provided an ideal tool for all Lovecraftian acolytes who wish to take up the terrifically fun sport of pilgrimage.

Fantasy Commentator, Vol. VI, No. 1, Fall 1987. \$3.00. (Order from A. Langley Searles, 48 Highland Circle, Bronxville, NY 10708-5909.)

(Reviewed by Robert M. Price)

This is the thirty-seventh issue of a yearly magazine going back (with a very few interruptions) into the 1940s. As such it is a valuable living link with the very first era of "scientifiction" and fantasy fandom. This "apostolic succession" of fandom still includes some of the original apostles, e.g., Sam Moskowitz and T. G. Cockcroft, among its contributing editors.

This issue features a major historical piece by Eric Leif Davin, "The Age of Wonder," which recounts the history of Hugo Gernsback's Amazing Stories and the pulp era it inaugurated. He tells the tale of Gernsback's founding of Amazing Stories and of Wonder Stories editor David Lasser, as well as of Bernarr McFadden's driving Gernsback into bankruptcy in order to take over his magazines. This article contains revealing interviews with Lasser and Charles D. Hornig, editor/publisher of The Fantasy Fan, hired by Gernsback at age 17 to replace Lasser at the helm of Wonder Stories. Hornig shares reminiscences of Clark Ashton Smith and H. P. Lovecraft, both of whom he had met. Hornig recalls that HPL used to pronounce "Cthulhu" in a way "no one else could." Very interesting stuff.

Sam Moskowitz presents the second installment of "Bernarr MacFadden and his Obsession with Science-Fiction." These and other articles make the 37th Fantasy Commentator a marvelous resource for understanding the pulp era in which all readers of Crypt of Cthulhu wish they lived!

FuBar: A Periodical 6 (Soft Books, 89 Marion Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M6R 1E6), \$4.00.

(Reviewed by Robert M. Price)

This strangely titled magazine is a revised and updated reissue of FuBar #1 from 1983. It is essentially an annotated listing of all issues of several small press Lovecraftian fanzines and journals. Information given for most titles includes principal contents of each issue, number of copies, dates of printings and editions, publisher addresses, cover price, etc. Titles covered are The Lovecraftian and The Lovecraft Collector, both from the 1940s; George Wetzel's The Lovecraft Collector's Library; The Lovecraftsman; Harry Morris' Nyc-talops; The Dark Brotherhood Journal and Newsletter (including an article detailing the history of that promising but failed early 70s Lovecraftian fan club by R. Boerem); The Journal of the H. P. Lovecraft Society; Lovecraft Studies; Crypt of Cthulhu; Dagon; FuBar; and Les Bibliothèques. Bell has omitted the granddaddy of all Lovecraftian magazines, The Acolyte, simply because he is planning a separate work devoted entirely to it. This magazine is of obvious importance for either the collector/completist or the historian of Lovecraft fandom. Bell's efforts have paid off in a very useful compendium of information that is to be highly recommended.

GRUE Magazine #6. \$4.00 from Hell's Kitchen Productions, Inc., P. O. Box 370, Times Square Station, NY, NY 10108. Checks to Peggy Nadramia, U. S. funds only.

(Reviewed by Robert M. Price)

The sixth issue of Grue is dedi-

cated to Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (Frankenstein) and Shirley Jackson (We Have Always Lived in the Castle). Appropriately, all of the issue's writers are women, as far as I can tell. The female theme graces the cover as well, which is a beautiful depiction of the three forms of the Moon Goddess by Peter H. Gilmore. The artists seem to be all males. The art throughout is striking and beautiful. Grue #6 strikes me as the most impressive yet.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

(continued from page 37)

enough credit. Even though we disagreed sharply in our assessments of Re-Animator, in general I have found his reviews to be a good guide for those who don't have the time to read everything—and he expresses his views much better than I ever could. His magazine reviews this time out were very welcome. --Allen Koszowski

Upper Darby, PA

Price has proven his slipshod scholarship once more! In his superfluous essay "Lovecraft as a Character in Lovecraftian Fiction," as well as in his windy editorial, Price attributes the description of HPL as "his own most fantastic creation" to Winfield Townley Scott. This is just the kind of "second-hand erudition" of which Lovecraft once accused Poe. Had Price actually read Scott's essay on Lovecraft he would have known what Scott himself knew: that it was Vincent Starrett who originally dubbed HPL "his own most fantastic creation." --Melvin G. Outlaw, Mount Pilot, NC

(continued on page 7)

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MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

I am very pleased with your journal. It's nice to know that someone out there is willing to treat Lovecraft's works with some respect and professionalism. I especially enjoy your "R'lyeh Review" section. I would, however, like to see more stories from beginning writers. Other than this, your publication is wonderful.

--Scott D. Hazen
Santa Cruz, CA

Anyone disappointed by Robert Bloch's portrayal of H. H. Holmes in American Gothic [reviewed in Crypt #50] should look out for either David Franke's The Torture Doctor (NY: Hawthorn Books, 1975. Reprinted by Avon Publishers, 1976) or Allan W. Eckert, The Scarlet Mansion (NY: Little, Brown & Company, 1985. Reprinted by Bantam Books, 1986). Of the two, Mr. Franke's The Torture Doctor proves most consistent. Working from contemporary documents, Franke begins his book with what looks like an investigation for insurance fraud that becomes progressively more complicated and more menacing until the full extent of Mr. Holmes' activities is revealed. The reader learns detail by detail as the insurance companies and then the police follow Holmes' trail from state to state, into Canada and back to the hidden chambers of his "castle" in Chicago. Mr. Franke has supplied photographs, a chronology, notes as to his sources and an index.

Mr. Eckert's The Scarlet Mansion, seeking motivation for Holmes' deeds and laying more credence in Mr. Holmes' own gloating version of events, Holmes' Own Story (which has the same exaggerated carelessness as the celebrated Newgate Calendar), is less concerned with the literal truth of events, as is Mr. Franke, than with reconciling events with what he feels was Mr. Holmes' sadistic, near necrophiliac temperament. This novel follows

Holmes from childhood to conviction with murder by murder, swindle by swindle description of his career. If the opening chapters chronicle Holmes' kinks ad nauseam without being truly convincing, these chapters extending from Holmes' Chicago residency and beyond flesh out the characters seen in Franke's book only (and sometimes more effectively) as historical ciphers and effectively evoke a little of what it must have meant to live in Chicago during the Columbian Exposition and turn of the century America in general. Imagine a mixture of the picaresque novel, the psychological novel, criminal history and de Tocqueville and you may come close to an idea of what this book is about. As the suggested juxtapositions imply, the book doesn't always succeed, but presents a much more vivid and more horrifying account of Holmes and his world than the slick, but hollow American Gothic.

--James Rockhill
South Bend, IN

I would invite you and Salmonson (and others) to personally explore the claims that HPL was a "misogynist." Whenever I have done so, I found, e.g., that HPL was not only married, but had many female friends, visitors, correspondents and colleagues (need I name them?).

--Philip Obed Marsh
Newquay, England

Forrest Hartmann tells me that he heard Don Wandrei fell in his home and broke his hand. The break required surgery, and Don died during the operation. Now S. T. Joshi tells me that there will be a Don Wandrei commemorative issue of Studies in Weird Fiction coming up this spring.

--Richard L. Tierney
Mason City, IA

Back in the early 70s, I made a
(continued on page 13)

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